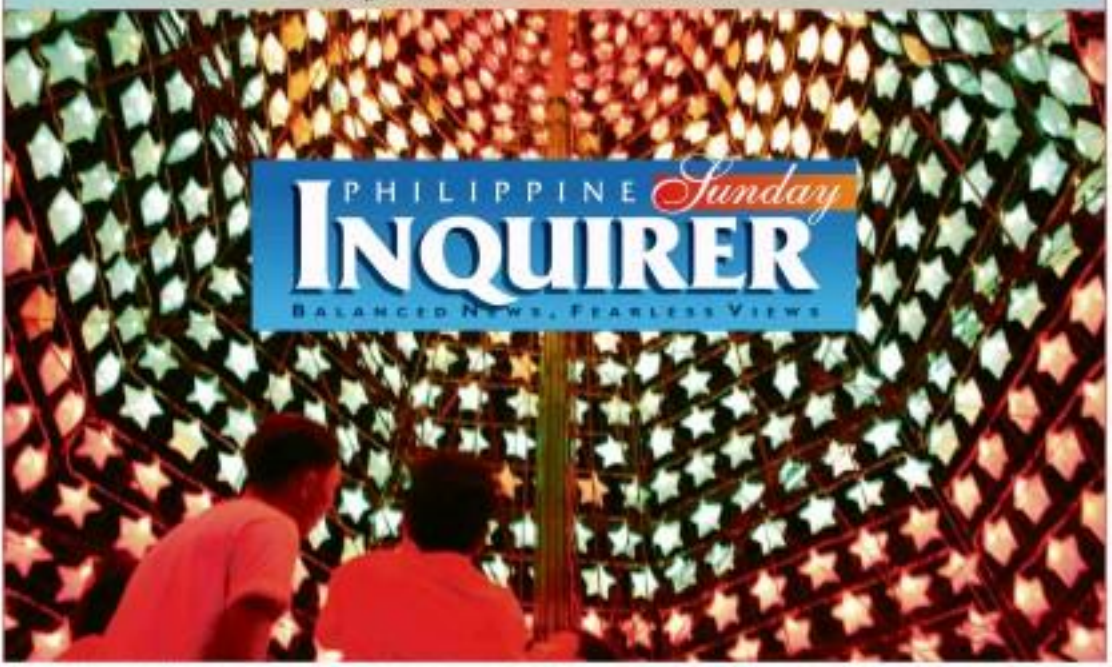
Sunday, December 27, 2009 ★★ Vol. 25 / No. 19



STARRY, STARRY NIGHT A 100-foot Christmas tree of 1,200 lanterns flickering different colors in Tagum City's showcase this holiday season. The tree is located at the city plaza.

Passenger foils bomber

Suspect tackled as plane nears Detroit airport

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—IT STARTED WITH A POP AND A burst of flame, then a brave passenger jumped over his seat to tackle a suspected terrorist as a packed airplane descended toward Detroit on Christmas Day.

The suspect, a Nigerian man with reported links to al-Qaida, was taken to the front of the plane with his pants cut off and his legs burned, said a passenger of Northwest Airlines Flight 253, with 278 passengers and 11 crew aboard, on a journey that originated in Nigeria and stopped in Amsterdam on its way to Detroit.

Law enforcement officials said the burns indicated the explosive was strapped to his legs. One US intelligence official said the explosive device was a mix of powder and liquid. It failed when the passenger tried to detonate it.

"There was a pop. And everybody got a little bit startled. And then we looked around and saw nothing," said Syed Jafry, who was sitting three rows behind the Nigerian.

"After a few seconds or so, there was a little bit of light, a little bit of—kind of flamish light and there was fire. And people began to panic almost. And everybody was rushing toward that area and tried to get water, a blanket and fire extinguisher."

People mainly tried to put the flame out, but it went a bit higher. There was smoke. Screams. Cries for water.

A young man there at first reacted behind Jafry did not panic, however. He rushed down the aisle and helped a handful of fellow passengers pounce on the suspect and put out the flames.

"He took care of that suspect. He handled him pretty good," Jafry told CNN on Friday after spending nearly five hours at the airport while he and his fellow passengers were interviewed by law enforcement.

It was all over relatively quickly and the Airbus 330 landed about 10 or 20 minutes later, he said.

Witnesses told Detroit news station WDIV that they saw the suspect—who

PASSENGER A4

Vatican to pardon attacker

VATICAN CITY—THE WOMAN WHO vaulted past security guards and knocked down Pope Benedict XVI during Christmas Eve Mass in St. Peter's Basilica would likely be forgiven, a Vatican official said on Christmas Day.

Stung by the televised knockdown of the Pope by the same woman who sought to assault him a year ago, however, the Vatican said it would review security procedures, raising the possibility of more stringent public access to the leader of the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

The 82-year-old Benedict was unhurt in the dramatic attack, quickly recovering and celebrating Christmas Eve Mass as planned. He looked well hours later as he delivered his traditional Christmas Day greeting from the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica.

But a retired Vatican diplomat, French Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, 87, fell and fractured his hip in the scuffle.

VATICAN A3

Pacman flick suffers film fest knockout

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Entertainment

SEVEN-TIME WORLD CHAMPION MANNY Pacquiao may have knocked out 38 of his 66 opponents, but he has failed to bring his billion-peso punch from the boxing ring to the box office.

Pacquiao's superhero film "Wapakman" landed in last place, earning only P750,000 on the first day of the box-week film in Manila Film Festival (MMFF).

According to official box office records

PACMAN A4

'Damayan' spirit alive amid threat of big Mayon eruption

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—IN A WORLD THAT HAS gotten smaller for the 47,000 evacuees from Mayon Volcano, everything has to be shared—from food to sleeping mats, from bathrooms to the air they breathe.

And they are living together after escaping a common danger—a possible major eruption of Mayon that, scientists yesterday warned, remained a real threat because of the buildup of magma, clogging the volcano.

In their now smaller world in an evacuation center in Albay Central School, 302 displaced families from Barangay Matanag receive the same amount of food from relief agencies—regardless of the size of each family.

It is in such situations that the *damayan* (sharing) culture among Filipinos comes to the fore, sociologists say.

"Smaller families would share what they have with bigger families. We would help one another," evacuee Cynthia Aydalla, a mother of four, told the Inquirer.

DAMAYAN A14

'Groovy' elderly get mall jobs

By Daniel L. Lucas
Business

SEVENTY-YEAR-OLD NOEL SANTIAGO'S family is not one that is normally considered hard-up.

In fact, Santiago has a chemical engineering degree and he worked as a plant manager for a large firm before he retired a few years ago.

Things turned sour, however, when his wife, a former public school teacher, was diagnosed with diabetes. The disease was so severe that one of her legs had to be amputated to save her life.

"That was the turning point of my life," he said. "We started to sell all our properties, and got buried in debt."

His retirement made the situation

GROOVY A2

After 'Ondoy,' street glitters with lights, hope

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SHE HOPES TO KEEP A FAMILY tradition—and the hope of a battered nation—alive.

In scrapping fact house, located on the famous Polocarpio Street in Mandaluyong City, with thousands of bright, flickering Christmas lights, businesswoman Norma Lim hopes to make a little more festive the celebration of a neighborhood that survived the onslaught of Tropical Storm "Ondoy."

She also wants to beam a message of hope in a country still struggling to recover from grief and shock.

Lim says the display is simple and the message is clear: "We should keep our faith and we should not lose hope that our country will see better days."

The country is going through a difficult time—typhoons have swept away houses and claimed lives, while an unimaginable massacre in Maguindanao has shocked the nation. Lim herself has had to find ways to cut down on electrical costs of her Christmas decors.

She has recycled many materials from last year's display and

AFTER ONDOY! A10

CHRISTMAS STREET Numerous lights and elaborate displays attract passersby and motorists along Polocarpio Street in Mandaluyong City.

• **6 RP sailors** die in ship fire NEWS / A2 • **Two more** Irish bishops quit over child abuse WORLD / A20 • **Suspected rebels** burn Quezon school ACROSS / A11 • **Food for** thought for the season TALK OF THE TOWN / A10 • **Can 2010** be better than Black Angus, yogurt and the Net? • Most wanted people and defining moments in 2009 • **SUNDAY INQUIRER MAGAZINE** • **Nurse swaps** uniform for coffee brewer's apron SUNDAY BIZ • **Robert's story** in this season of hope SUNDAY LIFESTYLE

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy
Aparri	Mostly Cloudy
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy
Clark	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Mostly Cloudy
Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Iloilo	Partly Cloudy
Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Davao	Mostly Cloudy

6/42 03 02 14 06 01 22

SUERTRES 2 0 9 5 6 0 9 4 1

6/49 LUZ-VIS-MIN 7 1 5 9 1 3

6/55 DIGIT 04 15 28 34 37 39

SUPERLOTTO 6/45 P8,445,205.00

POWERBALL 6/55 05 20 50 34 30 +06

P87,642,549.00

CHRISTMAS DAY TRAGEDY

6 RP sailors die in ship fire

CARACAS, VENEZUELA—NINE sailors, including six Filipinos, died when a Greek-owned freighter caught fire in the Caribbean off Venezuela's coast on Christmas Day, Venezuelan authorities said.

Three other Filipinos were among the five who were injured.

The Aegean Wind was carrying more than 37,000 tons of iron ore from Brazil to Houston when a blaze broke out in the crew's hull before dawn Friday, according to the vessel's owner, Piraeus-based Atlantic Bulk Carrier Management Ltd.

The cargo ship was about 160 kilometers north of Venezuela at the time, and about 93 km from Margarita Island.

Admiral Carlos Martinez Suárez Torres of the Venezuelan navy said nine crew members who had been listed as unaccounted for were dead. Six were from the Philippines and the other three were from Greece, he said.

"We don't know if they died from asphyxiation or burns, but the (ship's) commander has confirmed to us that they did die," Suárez Torres told Venezuela's state television.

He said the injured crew members were taken by helicopter to Margarita Island and were to be transferred later to a military hospital in the capital, Caracas.

Delicate situation

One was in "delicate condition" from severe burns, Asimat Torres told the state-run Venezolana de Televisora.

Two Filipinos suffered third-degree burns including on their face, said Isabel Lugo, the regional commander of Venezuela's Maritime Rescue and Aid service. Three Greek crew members had less severe burns.

Asimat Torres said the fire had been extinguished and 10 crew members, including the injured, were to be evacuated shortly.

The crew members were in the crew hull when the fire started, said Elias Gounis spokesperson, Atlantic Bulk Carrier Management.

"We have no news of them yet," Gounis said before Asimat Torres announced that the nine were dead.

Lugo told Televisa news network that the fire began in the engine room and spread to the cabins. AP/and Reuters

A good choice, Palace says of new SC justice

By TJ Burgonio

NEW SUPREME COURT JUSTICE JOSE Mendoza is a "good choice" and is not beholden to the appointing power, President Maria gloria Arroyo, Malacañang said yesterday.

Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III lauded Mr Arroyo for appointing Mendoza to the high tribunal, saying he was a "home-grown" magistrate who exemplified competence and integrity.

"He can be likened to a justice who rose to the highest echelons of the judiciary. The President made a good choice," he said in an interview over government radio DZRB.

Bello said Mendoza's "competence, integrity and dedication to the service of justice are unquestionable," added Bello, who served as justice secretary during the Aquino and Ramos administrations.

"I welcome his appointment. He's very capable, his integrity is beyond reproach," he said.

Mr Arroyo appointed Mendoza, Supreme Court administrator, to fill the vacancy left by retired Senior Associate Justice Leonardo Quisumbing, becoming the 187th justice of the high court.

The seat left by recently retired Associate Justice Minita Chico-Nazario is the only vacancy in the 15-member tribunal.

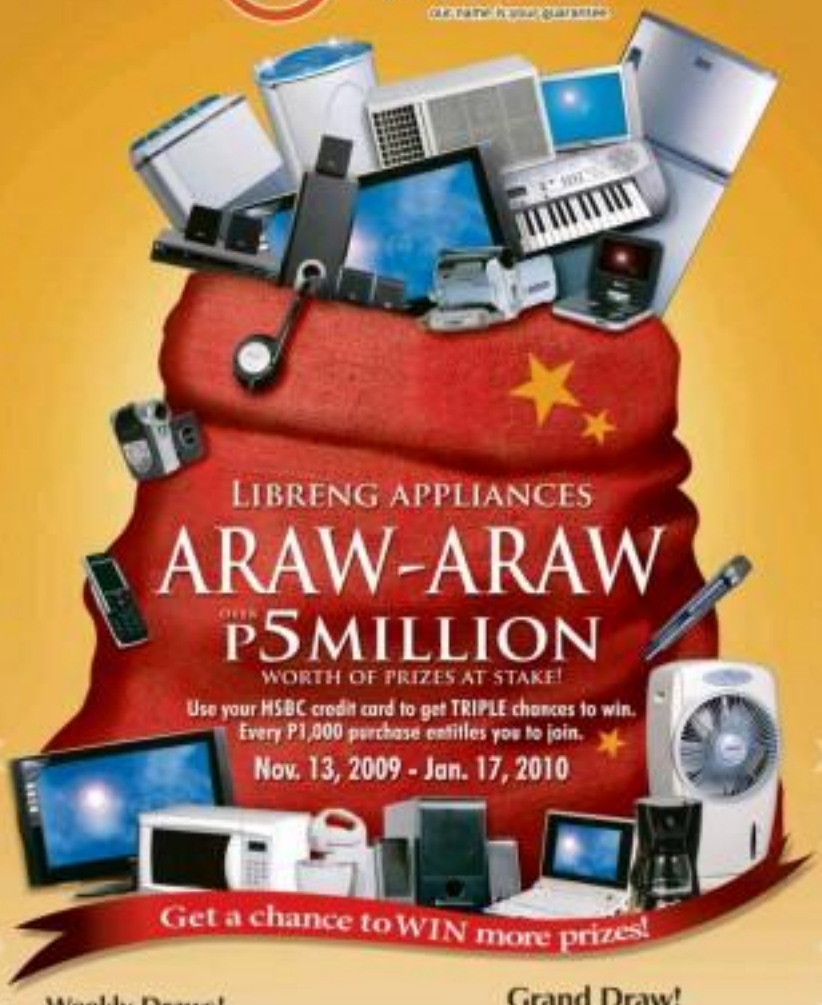
After finishing his law degree in 1972, Perez was appointed legal assistant in the high court's Office of the Reporter, rising through the ranks to occupy higher positions in the next 38 years.

His appointment "caps an illustrious career of 39 years" in government service—which started out as a stint in the tribunal, SC spokesperson Jose Midas Marquez said.

While appointed by Ms Arroyo, Perez is expected to exercise independent-mindedness when the time comes for him and the rest of the justices to decide on a legal issue brought before the tribunal, Bello said.

"You know judges, while they are grateful in being appointed by the President, the moment they enter the judiciary, they will act like the Lady Justice, and they will have to dispense justice in accordance with what is supported by evidence, in accordance with due process and in accordance with the rule of law," he said.

SM appliance CENTER



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Passenger foils bomber as plane nears Detroit

From page A1

who sitting on a county seat—emerge from the bathroom with a pillow balanced on his stomach and a syringe in hand.

He then injected the syringe into something held to his stomach area—possibly a powdery substance—and smoke and flames quickly followed.

"It reminded like a fire cracker in a pillowcase," said Peter Smith, a traveler from The Netherlands. He said the horror passengers appeared to have been harmed.

The White House said it believed it was an attempted act of terrorism and cabinet secretary secretary were updated as soon as the plane landed. It did not specify what those were.

Richard Reid case

The incident was reminiscent of Richard Reid, who tried to destroy a trans-Atlantic flight in 2001 with explosives hidden in his shoes, but was subdued by other passengers. Reid is serving a life sentence.

Law enforcement officials described the suspect in Friday's attempted attack as Umar Farouk Abdul Mutallab. One law enforcement official said the man claimed to have been instructed by al-Qaeda to detonate the plane over Detroit. All the officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing.

Another law enforcement official said Mutallab's name had surfaced earlier on at least one U.S. intelligence database, but not to the extent that he was placed on a watch list or a no-fly list.

Mutallab was being questioned on Friday evening, an intelligence official said the Nigerian was being held and treated in a hospital.

A spokesperson for police in the Dutch airport in Amsterdam declined comment about the case or about security procedures at the airport for Flight 253.

Schiphol Airport, one of Europe's busiest with a history load of transfer passengers from Africa and Asia to North America, recently enforce European security regulations, including only allowing small amounts of liquid in hand luggage that must be placed inside clear plastic bags.

Tighter security measures

There was parking out of the evidence about the flight and it was on final approach to Detroit, said Federal Aviation Administration spokesperson Elizabeth Isham Gray. That was when the pilot declared an emergency she said.

Mutallab said while he was having the plane, he looked at fellow the man had been sitting and saw a pillow that seemed to have been burned.

Michelle Jeanne, who was seated in the front row of the plane, said the man involved was brought in the front area and seated near her.

She said his legs appeared to be badly burned and his pants were set off. She said he was taken off the plane handcuffed to a stretcher.

US President Barack Obama was notified of the incident and discussed it with security officials, the White House said. It said Obama is monitoring the situation and receiving regular updates from his vacation spot in Hawaii.

Passengers can expect to see heightened screening measures on the flying dog and officer until and Inflammed-detection apparatus in some airports, but there will also be unspecified new visible precautions as well, officials said.

THIS VIDEO image shows security personnel at the bottom of the stairs of the Northwest Airlines Flight 253 in the enemy after arriving at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport from Amsterdam. A passenger from Nigeria, who said he was acting on al-Qaida's instructions, tried to blow up the plane.

Holiday threat not seen

The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security issued an intelligence note on Dec. 16 about the threat plenes for the holiday season, which was obtained by The Associated Press. At the time, officials said they had no specific information

From page A1

Passengers on flights to the U.S. from Nigeria, Yemen and other countries will face additional screening, including pat-downs and checks of carry-on bags, officials said.

Napolitano said Friday that the new measures were announced before Christmas Day "because we want to be extra careful and cautious at this time of year."

Napolitano said she was not aware of any specific plot against the U.S. during the holiday season.

Officials said Mutallab was on a U.S. government database used to screen travelers for possible ties to terrorism, but was not on a list that would have led to his being denied boarding a plane bound for the U.S. or subjected to additional screening.

Mutallab's father reported his son to U.S. officials in Nigeria last month, saying he was concerned about the man's contacts with militants in Yemen, a U.S. official said.

Mutallab was identified by a Nigerian official as a well-to-do engineering graduate of University College London. He reportedly lived in Dubai before traveling to Yemen.

Mutallab's family in Nigeria is one of the country's most prominent and wealthy, with interests in banking, oil and other businesses.

Vatican to pardon attacker, review security procedures

From page A1

his will be operated on in the coming days, according to a hospital spokesperson.

The president, identified by the Vatican as Secundo Maccio, is 23-year-old Desha Indian assistant with a history of mental problems. He was undergoing and hospitalized in Rome.

She was not under formal arrest and it was unlikely she would face charges.

Maccio told doctors she "did not want to hurt" the Pope, La Repubblica newspaper reported.

The Vatican spokesperson, the Rev. Federico Lombardi, told Agence France-Presse that Maccio was "apparently unbalanced," but that the Vatican was likely to be "very lenient" and that she would not be prosecuted.

The Vatican said that Maccio was not armed.

Question about security

But the assault on the Pope, captured on television and broadcast cameras and replayed countless times on TV and the Internet, raised serious questions about the Vatican—and Italian—security.

It was the first direct attack on Benedict since assuming the papacy in 2005, and it came less than two weeks after Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was hospitalized after a seemingly mentally ill man struck him in the face in a campaign rally.

Underscoring the Pope's vulnerability in the midst of throngs of people, the attacker also brought to mind the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981 by Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turkish gunman, in St. Peter's Square. Coincidentally, Agca is to be released from a Turkish prison next month.

Papal security is provided by the Vatican gendarmerie, a police police force; the Swiss Guards, who are more akin to an army; and Italian law enforcers.

Lombardi said that in response to the attack, "I think the Vatican gendarmerie, the Swiss Guards and the other officials will do their reflection."

Compounding the security questions, the Vatican said Maccio had tried the same thing last year, wearing the same red, Indian-style dress.

During the 2008 Christmas Eve Mass, Maccio never managed to reach the Pope and was quickly tackled by security personnel.

During Thursday night's events, Benedict—who limped and kneeled over the barricade as Benedict walked down the aisle at the start of Christmas Eve service. As security guards wrestled her to the ground, she grabbed onto Benedict's vestments, bringing him down with her.

Lombardi described the incident as "an assault," but he stressed "it wasn't dangerous because she wasn't armed."

Officials noted Maccio wore the same clothes both attacks.

Interior Ministry officials said Friday they would give Maccio and the Asso were expected until she had traveled to Rome specifically for the Christmas Eve Mass as she did last year.

Odd similarity

Italian officials reminded on the odd similarity of the security breach at the Vatican to one made two weeks ago on Premier Berlusconi by a man with a history of psychological problems. The attack in Milan broke the jaw, prosecutors said Thursday.

"We need in some way to be more vigilant over all, because in an open and globalized world, the number of undisciplined people and their aggressiveness can increase," Rome Mayor Gianni Alemanno said.

It is not the first time a potential attacker had come into direct contact with Benedict during his nearly five-year papacy. Security analysts have frequently warned the Pope is too exposed to his public appearances.

But Lombardi said it was not realistic to think the Vatican could ensure 100 percent security for the Pope considering he was regularly surrounded by tens of thousands of people for his weekly audiences, Masses, papal greetings and other events.

"People want to see him up close, and he's pleased to see them close to us," Lombardi said. "It now risk doesn't seem realistic in a situation in which there's a direct rapport with the people."

Lombardi said that he did not anticipate major changes in protocol, saying the Vatican was generally opposed to measures that would segregate the Pontiff from his flock.

"Normally anyone, for instance, can get into a papal Mass. Tickets are required but are easy to get if requested in advance. Identification cards are not necessary to gain access to the basilica, though everyone goes through a metal detector.

Nonetheless, the review of how the Pope's protectors do their job in such circumstances suggested that Vatican security officials could explore public security measures. Reports from New York Times Rome Bureau Service, AFP and AP

Pacman flick suffers film fest knockout

From page A1

released by the MMFF through executive producer Vic Del Rosario, the Comedigan, the top idiots write a close Chino-centered fight among special effects movies: "Kay Pandoy," "Ang Lihim Ng Kanyang Asawang" and "Shake, Rattle & Roll 11."

"Ang Pandoy" is a fantasy action epic top-billed by actor-politician Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., earned P18.9 million nationwide. Second was the Vic Sotto horror-comedy "Ang Lihim Ng Kanyang Asawang," with P16.2 million.

In third was the long-running, all-star cast horror trilogy franchise "Shake" from Regal Entertainment, with P16.2 million.

Although "Pacquiaman" is also a top box-flick laden with special effects, it apparently failed to attract Pacquiao's hordes of fans who usually troop in moviehouses to watch his fights via satellite, said Mimaropa Gov. Joseph Ramos.

Adored as a boxer

Reyes, the director behind two MMFF top-grossers ("Hotel, Kwak, Kwak" in 2006 and "Sakal, Sakali, Lakad Takbo" in 2007), offered a theory on Pacquiao's lackluster performance at the box office.

"Filipinos adore him as a personfighter ... as an athlete, but not necessarily and as an actor, singer ... not even as a politician," Reyes said.

The filmmaker recalled that Pacquiao lost in his first congressional bid in 2007 when he ran against Rep. Darlene Antonino-Custodio in South Cotabato. He is running again in next May's elections, this time for the lone congressional seat of Sarangani.

Reyes added if Pacquiao's entry in the MMFF turns private says, "Sisak ng Katinubo," was also a sad reader or else idly, earning barely P2 million by the end of the festival.

"People will stop their lives to watch him fight in the ring, but it seems they will not go out of their way to watch him portray himself in a movie," Reyes said. "He is a real life hero, not a superhero."

Rumored romance

Reyes also an opinion morning in the entertainment industry that rumors of his romance-fling with "Sisprincess" costar Alma Kamila didn't help in promoting what is, technically, a family movie—with the same way that gossip of an illicit romance with "Kamandag" costar Ara Mina didn't help their film at the box office.

"There is a disconnect, politics-wise. That's possible," Reyes said. "But in those movies, there's nothing to see scandalous, shocking or salacious about the gossip organized by Manny and Boots, anyway."

In an earlier interview, Pacquiao said he forgot that the "campaign-manager" would watch his movie with Emelda.

"What's the use of the intrigues if our movie doesn't make money?" he said in Filipino.

From all indications, the controversy didn't help.

"He is an icon, it helped. He has to know his limits, his parameters," Reyes said. "As a movie personality, his biggest achievement is that he gave the world his mother, Dionisia, who is such a colorful character."

Fantasy over drama

Rounding up the box office results of the first day of the 2010 MMFF—now in its 35th year—are the romance drama "I Love You, Goodbye," P11.7 million; the comedy-drama "Bekodel," Melody Bet ... Amo," P6 million; the Chinese family saga "Mano Po 6: A Mother's Love," P6.6 million; and "Wapakman," P700,000.

Reyes said "the early trend" in the film box was that dramas films, like "I Love You," "Bekodel" and "Mano Po," were clobbered at the tills by fantasy-inspired efforts like the "Kamandag," "Darling" and "Shake."

Although "Mano Po" was graded A by the Cinema Evaluation Board for its polish and competence, it struggled on its first day.

"That's only the first week of movie attendance. I am praying that moviegoers would have enough money for the second week of movie-watching ... for the good of the show biz. Time and time again, revelation in penny had shape this Christmas season."

Another 'war'

Another interesting twist in the film box office since is that while GMA Films landed in first place with Tuesday's rival ABS-CBN's entry, Star Cinema's "I Love You," was in fourth slot.

"That's quite a blow pill to swallow ... in the context of the network war," Reyes said.

The awards night is where almost for moviegoers (Monday) and the most prestigious (Wednesday) film often ends up winning best Picture, according to the box's veterans, Lumalang said.

Revilla is happy but hardly surprised by his film's strong showing.

"Movie watching at Christmas time is always for the entire family," he said. "I heard that our film made P200,000 on its first screening hour at SM North Edsa. That's just my own opinion, with only screening. It's a crowd-favorite."

The win confirmed by Comedigan "Daddy" earned over P1 million in one day in SM North Edsa. It beat last year's record.

800 cinemas

Reyes said that a film first enters box office performance could also be affected by other factors, like the number and accessibility of cinemas each entry would get.

"Producers show love in allotting the cinemas," Reyes said. "A producer would just love to hope that he or she gets good cinemas ... that are both accessible and visible. But the most important factor is still content. Fantasy has consistently proven to be consistent, while serious films usually don't work."

Comedigan said the division of cinemas was done "fairly."

"Each entry got 119 cinemas. The 800 cinemas nationwide are divided into seven groups and that's when the producers divide among themselves, by drawing lots."

'Groovy' elderly get jobs

From page A1

A new, more challenging.

"All of a sudden, everything I worked hard for was gone just like that," he said.

But the strong-willed Gondo got did not lose hope. He decided to get up a small services store which helped him cope with their daily expenses, including the heavy demands of his wife's illness.

"In no engineer, I also started to accept art projects and created toilet in cans," he said.

In September, Santiago was invited to work in a customer assistant at SM Hypermarket in Valenzuela City as part of the store's "Grandparents' Day" promotional activities.

Under the "Lolo Ganda, Lolo Pogi" program—a corporate social responsibility effort of the SM Hypermarket and Super mother program—senior citizens like Santiago are "invited" (though employee rationale) to work in branches of the country's largest supermarket chain during special occasions like Grandparents' Day.

Started in 2008, the Lolo Ganda, Lolo Pogi program has helped close to 800 senior citizens by giving them opportunities to make valuable use of their free time. During the last, they socialize with each daily from eight to 4:30 p.m.

Overwhelming response

The response has been overwhelming, according to Sandi Bailey of the SM food retail division.

"My retired Lolo Ganda and Lolo Pogi's spots in six our stores in greet our customers as they arrive because we wanted to further heighten up their shopping experience," he said.

Every day, shoppers are surprised and delighted to see the "groovy" grandpas and grandmas wearing their Lolo Ganda and Lolo Pogi suits, aprons and fancy hats, greeting them a "happy afternoon" or "happy evening" as they enter the store premises.

Entrance, checkout counter

At the SM Hypermarket and SM Supermarket outlets, Lolo Ganda and Lolo Pogi customer assistants are stationed at the entrance and at the checkout counter to assist clients as needed.

Other program participants include 67-year-old Zenaida Alcazar, who works at SM Hypermarket Global. She finds the work light and enjoyable, especially since shoppers are delighted to see her.

Manuel Ramos, 64, a retired bank loan officer, also joined the program to do something worthwhile rather than just stay at home and watch TV.

Another Lolo Ganda program participant is Ernesto Calimlim, 63, who used to work in the health insurance industry before putting a food stall where operations she was unable to sustain.

Both his children died a few years ago and the near loss left him destitute. Before working as a Lolo Ganda customer assistant, his main activity would be her regular Sunday trips to the cemetery to visit her children's graves.

"I felt so lonely because I was so ngawa," she said. "One of my grandchildren had told me that senior citizens were needed. I applied immediately."

Loneliness eased

Working as a customer assistant helped ease her loneliness over the death of her children, and she is now looking forward to participating in the program next year.

Santiago agrees she's also 63-year-old Mayle Buenaventa, a single parent, who is hoping to complete her Social Security System contributions through the program, so widow income when she reaches senior pensions before her Lolo Ganda career ends in July, Bongcac Ramos.

"Being a customer assistant, even for just a short period of time, is a big help for me," said Santiago. She retired grandmother "finds from the fact that it augments our family's income. I am also not emotionally and psychologically."

Given the reactions of beamed shoppers during the holiday season, it would seem that they feel it, too.

Stay out of Mayon, Palace tells politicians

By TJ Burgonio

DAYS AFTER PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO gave away relief goods to residents who fled rumbling Mayon Volcano in Albay, Malacañang is now appealing to candidates to stay away from them.

Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III said yesterday he wasn't surprised that some candidates had flown to Albay to deliver bags of grocery items in the evacuation and later posed for pictures.

"My appeal to them is not to interfere with the relief operations," he said over government radio dzRH. "Let's not politicize this. We're talking of the lives of our people."

Bello, himself running for senator under the banner of the administration party, reminded the candidates that the national and provincial governments were capable enough to provide for the needs of the evacuees.

"Since Gov. Joey Salceda is very efficient, we expect that the welfare of our countrymen is being taken care of with utmost care and focus. In fact's been positive out of this," he said.

On top of that, the Department of Social Welfare and Development has its own stock of food provisions and can transport these anytime to the evacuation centers, he added.

Secretary Esperanza Cabral in Cluz-A. Tan can depend on her to take care of the safety and every convenience of the evacuees," he said.

Ms Arroyo last Wednesday flew overnight to Legazpi City from Hong Kong to visit the thousands of evacuees cooped up in evacuation centers, and to distribute food packs. She is seeking a congressional seat in her home province Pampanga in the May 2010 elections.

This came after Liberal Party standard bearer Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, his running mate Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, and Nacionalista Party senatorial candidate Ichel Satuito, among others, descended on the evacuation centers, handing relief goods. Sen. Manny Villar, presidential candidate of the Nacionalista Party, has also visited and distributed relief goods to the evacuees.

Surprisingly, Salceda, an economic adviser of Ms Arroyo, welcomed such visits, saying politicians were bringing cheer, and in effect, some sort of positive mental comfort to the displaced residents.

Close to 30,000 villagers have been crammed to evacuation camps since Mayon began rumbling and spewing lava days ago, spoiling Christmas here.

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DepEd seeks more protection for schools

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

EDUCATION SECRETARY JESLI LAPUS yesterday appealed for more protection for teachers and students as he expressed relief over the safe release of the Basilan State College's vice president after two weeks in captivity.

Straight for comment yesterday, Lapus expressed "great relief" after suspected Abu Sayyaf members finally released Dr. Orlando Fajardo on Christmas Eve.

However, he told the Inquirer that teachers and students needed more protection, apparently referring to recent incidents involving educators and their pupils in Mindanao.

Lapus said: "Educators deserve all the support and caring from the community, no violence and impunity."

Last month, armed men also attacked a school in Agusan del Sur and took 75 people, including teachers and students, as hostages. The suspects eventually released the hostages.

Harsher penalty

Lapus said there was "probably a need for a harsher penalty for crimes committed against students and educators," adding that "only a protective, progressive and literate society will minimize lawlessness and crimes."

Released Abbasp victim Fajardo stated upon the accelerated Teacher Education Program (Atep) offered at the Basilan State College, where 37 Muslim public school teachers are earning their diploma in BS Education, major in Islamic Studies and Arabic Language, the education department earlier said.

The college trains Muslim teachers under the Madrasah education program to qualify as regular teachers called "ustadz."

Several men snatched Fajardo from his quarters just across the college compound in Isabela City on Dec. 20. Fajardo said he was kept in a house barricaded most of time but he could move around.

He himself was initially demanded a P20-million ransom, but ultimately released him after his family paid P100,000 for "board and lodging" fees, officials said.

Mercury dips

KEEP YOUR JACKETS HANDY AND guard against respiratory diseases, the weather bureau said yesterday, as the mercury dipped in the past few days.

The temperature dropped to 20.4 degrees Celsius on Dec. 23 and 19.8 degrees yesterday, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The readings were taken at Pagasa's former Garden in Quezon City at around 8 a.m.

The mercury can still drop because of the persistence of the northeast monsoon, the cold wind from Siberia and China, said Pagasa forecast Prisco Nilo.

Alexis Pages

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We find ways

MetroBank

Divers join Manila Bay search with deep-sea gear

MANILA, YESTERDAY — A...
...trapped in the search of a passenger boat that sank two days earlier while rescuers kept up their search for 20 people listed as missing on the weekend.

The coast guard divers were using special deep-sea equipment to enable them to reach the wreck of the M/V Catalya II, a fishing wooden vessel that sank on Tuesday in Manila Bay and now lies 120 feet under.

"They are now descending with the search equipment so they can properly reach the wreckage underneath and hopefully conduct the diving operations and find out the conditions of the vessel," said Philippine Coast Guard chief Adm. Wilfredo de Tranjeo.

He said that while the coast guard knew where the Catalya II went down, it could not be certain of its final resting place.

3 killed

Officials said they feared the bodies of the missing may be trapped inside the boat, but surveillance aircraft not rescue ships were still combing the waters in search of any survivors.

"We hope that we can turn up something," Tenazas said, despite concerns not having found any survivors for more than 48 hours.

Three people were killed when the Catalya II, which was taking holidaymakers to their home village in Mindoro Occidental, smashed into the 60-meter bulker trapped inside.

Coast Guard and Philippine Navy boats have widened their search to 20-40 nautical miles from the wreckage, but found no signs of life.

Possibility

"The probability that there are bodies trapped in the M/V Catalya II becomes stronger. There is also a strong current so there are also datums that some of the bodies are already in the South China Sea," Coast Guard spokesman Armando Balilo said.

Officials are not ruling out the possibility some passengers may have swum to safety.

A 6-meter Marine probe is expected in Jolo, but Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. is seeking a separate inquiry into the mishap.

Sen. Richard Gordon has said that an unfinished inquiry into...
...was expected to include the Senate's...
...between MV Catalya II and FB Ananda off Limbones Island.

Pimentel, however, insisted that a separate inquiry would be a wiser move and lamented that previous congressional inquiries into sea tragedies had failed to...
...due to...
...and even members.

"We've had a series of sea tragedies that led to the deaths of thousands of our countrymen. We should come up with...
...and pinpoint which agency and people are liable for this tragedy. We've not been able to do that," he said.

Suspension

Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III said that President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the suspension of the operations of the San Nicolas Shipping, operator of the ill-fated Catalya II, and Ananda. With reports from Bridlee L. Alabi, TJ Burgonio and AFP

Solon wants nutrition info on pet food labels

WHAT ARE YOU FEEDING BABY and Mutang?

Pet owners should know what they are feeding their furry friends through the proper listing of ingredients on pet food labels, according to a lawmaker.

The Alliance of Rural Concerned Party-list Rep. Nerissa Santiago filed a bill that would require pet food manufacturers to disclose the chemicals and additives found in their products that will serve as a guide to pet owners.

Santiago has filed the Pet Food Additives Information Bill or House Bill 7059 that seeks to require pet food manufacturers to put the list of ingredients and additives on the packaging.

The bill also requires manufacturers to put a warning if the ingredient or additive is a known carcinogen or has been proven to cause harmful side effects based on standards set by the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD).

In the bill's explanatory note, Santiago said not all substances added to commercially sold pet food are harmless. While some additives are added to preserve the freshness of the product or improve its taste, they may also be the culprit behind the animals' illnesses, he said.

Preservatives placed, which he said is used as a drying fluid in embalming, is added to pet food to retain its moisture and texture. While it prevents bacteria from growing, it may hinder the growth of friendly bacteria in the intestines. It may also lead to constipation or cancer.

He also stated that Ethoxyquin, once considered a poison, is added to grain that is fed to animals raised for slaughter before they reach two years old. The antioxidant, however, reportedly causes liver cancer in dogs and death in newborn puppies.

Santiago also said that sodium nitrite, which is added to meat to retain its red color, may also pose a danger to this is converted into nitrosamines, which may cause cancer. Aaliz H. Salmorin

TO ALL CONCERNED:

This is to confirm the prices of the following as part of the voluntary price reduction initiative of various pharmaceutical companies.

The prices of the following medicines should not exceed the GMA-P effective immediately.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT/ MOLECULE	DOSAGE STRENGTH AND FORM	COMPANY NAME	OLD PRICE	GMAP
ANGIOGRAPHICS				
1. Fentanyl (as citrate)	50 mcg/ mL, (10 mL) ampul injection	Janssen	1155.00	577.50
	50 mcg/ mL, (2 mL) ampul injection	Janssen	924.00	462.00
ANTI-DIABETIC				
HYPOGLYCEMIC				
2. Glimepiride	3 mg tablet	Sanofi-Aventis	15.00	8.00
ANTIGONADOTROPIC				
3. Clomiphene	50 mg ampul injection	Takeda Pharmaceuticals	495.25	346.66
	1000 mg ampul injection	Takeda Pharmaceuticals	689.92	482.95
ANTI-VIRICID				
4. Triamacide (Aminomacin)	5 mg tablet	Pharma Link Asia Pacific	10.50	6.99
CHOLAGOGUES/ HEPATIC PROTECTION				
5. Ursodeoxycholic + Dicetylmethionine + Neodimannide Ascorbate	100 mg + 30 mg + 20 mg capsule	Pharma Link Asia Pacific	18.00	12.60
	187.5 mg + 50 mg + 25 mg/5ml, syrup (60mL)	Pharma Link Asia Pacific	368.75	211.88
	187.5 mg + 50 mg + 25 mg/5ml, syrup (125mL)	Pharma Link Asia Pacific	481.75	350.00
ANTI-HYPERTENSIVE				
6. Cefalexil	100 mg tablet	Bristol Myers Squibb	91.70	76.14
7. Losartan (as potassium)	50 mg tablet	Chiral	22.00	13.86
ANTI-HISTAMINE				
8. Cetirizine (as dihydrochloride)	10 mg tablet	Chiral	23.52	16.11
NON-STEROIDAL ANTI-INFLAMMATORY				
DRUGS (MAIN)				
9. Diclofenac (as sodium)	50 mg tablet	Chiral	7.26	6.72
ANTIBIOTIC				
ACTIVE/ SYNTHETIC				
10. Cefalexin (as monohydrate)	500 mg capsule	Chiral	27.72	23.10
11. Clarithromycin	250 mg tablet	Chiral	70.00	36.00
	500 mg tablet	Chiral	117.60	64.00
ANTIFUNGAL				
12. Miconazole	2%, 15 g lube cream	Chiral	204.80	163.71
13. Ketoconazole	1%, 15 g lube cream	Chiral	151.80	129.03
VITAMINS AND MINERALS				
14. Multivitamins		Chiral	13.80	12.42
ANTIHEMORRHOIDAL ANTIEMETICS				
15. Betamethasone	15 g lube ointment	Chiral	430.00	387.00
ANTI-CHOLESTEROL				
16. Simvastatin	10 mg tablet	Chiral	18.00	12.99
	20 mg tablet	Chiral	21.60	15.12
	40 mg tablet	Chiral	28.40	19.84
ANTI-ANGINAL				
17. Trimetazidine HCl	20 mg tablet	Chiral	16.80	13.20
ANTINEOPLASTIC ANTIBIOTICS				
18. Allopurinol Acetate	100 mg tablet	Bristol Myers Squibb	456.75	341.31
19. Rodamide	1 g vial for injection	Qualimed	2800.00	2340.00
	2 g vial for injection	Qualimed	5200.00	3510.00
20. Mitomycin	10 mg vial for injection	Qualimed	1400.00	1170.00
21. Erlotinib	150 mg tablet	Roche	5225.00	4180.00
22. Tamoxifen	20 mg tablet	Astra Zeneca	64.35	32.00
ANTIVIRALS				
23. Oseltamivir	75 mg capsule	Roche	150.56	101.56

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Sunday, December 27, 2009
Holy Family

1st Reading / 1 S 1:20-22, 24-28

Samuel is the name given to the boy Hannah bore to Elkanah after she had asked the Lord for him. When Elkanah went up with his family to offer the annual sacrifice and to pay his vow to Yahweh, Hannah would not go saying that she would wait until Samuel, the child he was to be weaned. Then she would bring him to Yahweh and stay there forever.

When the child was weaned, Hannah and Elkanah went up to Shiloh with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to Yahweh's house in Shiloh. The child was still young.

After they had slain the bull, they brought the child to Eli. Hannah exclaimed: "Oh, my lord, look! I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to Yahweh. I asked for this child and Yahweh granted me the favor I begged of him. Now I, too, lend Yahweh to Yahweh. As long as he lives, he belongs to Yahweh."

And they worshiped Yahweh there.

Responsorial Psalm / 1 S 2:1, 2, 22-26

The other reading of love the Father has for us. We are called children of God, and we really are. This is why the world does not know us, because it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children and what we shall be has not yet been disclosed. We know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin commits lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and there is no sin in him. Everyone who remains in him does not sin; anyone who sins has neither seen him nor known him.

Gospel / Lk 2:41-52

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, as was customary. And when Jesus was 12 years old, he went up with them according to the custom for this feast. After the festival was completed, but the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem and his parents did not know it.

They thought he was in the company and after walking the whole day they looked for him among their relatives and friends. As they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem searching for him, and on the third day they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. And all the people were astounded by his understanding and his answers.

His parents were very surprised when they saw him and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried while searching for you." Then he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Do you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand this answer.

Jesus went down with them, returning to Nazareth, and he continued to be subject to them. As for his mother, she kept all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and in favor and in favor before God and men.

Commentary:

Jesus at seventeen: the Jesus had to be about his Father's business, for this was his life's work and his unchanging purpose. The Father's plan for our salvation, up to 12 Jesus would speak intelligently about the scriptures, amazing all who heard with his wisdom and understanding. That was his behavior, demanding as many of Jesus that would only give more detailed later as we move to the Father from now and have done as they preach.

We can see that part of the story, for we see the great privilege of listening to the Lord Jesus every time we open the Bible. Jesus, teachers, like words from the scriptures to inspire, convict, motivate and console. Jesus continues to be about his divine business in the heavens as Eternal God and Son as he intercedes for the salvation of his people. Jesus' heart and mind were always on pleasing the Holy Father.

May we keep these feelings in our hearts as we celebrate with the Lord Jesus that we might remain in Him and He in us.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Small-minded

THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB OF CONGRESS ANnually is to deliberate on and then pass the national budget. But when the time came for the House of Representatives, which theoretically has the power of the purse, to vote on the General Appropriations Act for 2010, fewer than 30 congressmen were present at the session. Only the fiction of an acquiescent quorum allowed the passage of the measure early in this month.

EDITORIAL

But a raise is one said the budget was held up by lawmakers who wanted reassurances their pork barrel would remain intact. In the end, the pork barrel for lawmakers was increased by P3.4 billion. That, it would seem, was the main preoccupation of lawmakers, since they didn't even bother to dignify the budget with their attendance and votes.

The overall budgetary percentage devoted to legislators' pork is actually dwarfed by the vast budgetary patronage enjoyed by the President. Yet such is the small-mindedness of legislators that they didn't even consider fiscally engaging the President in a showdown by depriving her of her enormous intelligence and other funds.

Instead, as obliging Congress gave President Macapagal-Arroyo the lion's share of patronage and made proposals to help the executive in an election year. Sen. Edgardo J. Angara publicly pushed for a P500 million budget ostensibly for children's programming in PTV-4, but a boost for the government propaganda network would, of course, have public relations benefits going into the elections.

Angara and his counterpart in the House, Quirino Rep. Junie Cua, chairs of the budget committees, lopped off P64 billion from the allocations for debt service. Appropriations for specific agencies, however, were increased. The Department of Agriculture, for example, had its budget increased by P8.4 billion. But during the budget deliberations, one opposition senator pointed out that the DA had built farm-to-market roads in areas with no farms or roads leading to beach resorts. Greater scrutiny of the department that has been used to camouflage electioneering-oriented spending seemed called for, but instead it got more money to spend, as did other select agencies like the Department of Transportation and Communications, which got P3.8 billion more. In contrast, the Department of Education got an increase of only P2 billion.

At the same time, the powerful chairmen apparently took care of their own. While the President proposed P190 million for the Aurora Special Economic Zone Authority, after the so-called "third chamber" was done with the budget, the appropriation for Aurora had grown to P680 million.

In addition, there's a P10 billion Economic Stimulus Fund, supposedly aimed at ameliorating the effects of the global recession. The specifics are slim, but the general bookkeeping of this fund smacks of election-oriented opportunism: P500 million in financial assistance for the Tulong Puno program, P1 billion for education and skills development training programs of Kabuhayang Pinoy, P1 billion in training assistance for land workers, P5 billion for school buildings, P1 billion for medicines and supplies, P2.5 billion for food production, and P1 billion for Bantay Kalikasan and Bantay Dagat.

While the 2010 budget is supposed to cover the last six months of the current administration and the first six months of the next administration, we can confidently predict that more of this budget would be spent by June 30, 2010.

The Department of Finance projects a budget deficit of P380 billion this year, P50 billion more than expected. Next year's budget deficit is expected to hit P278 billion, but if this year is any guide (and the pressures to spend recklessly will be intense, since it's going to be an election year), that estimate will prove far too conservative. Barclays Capital pegs the coming year's deficit at P300 billion, while the Royal Bank of Scotland puts it at P322 billion.

As it is, the swan song of the current crop of finance officials is that a balanced budget won't be on the horizon until 2015. And this comes from an administration that were pledged to wipe out the deficit by 2010.

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God bless the Supreme Court!

THIS BEING THE LAST SUNDAY OF THE year, and still within the Yuletide, I will be less combative and, in the spirit of the season, I shall try to be more liberal to you than the season. Below are brought into this troubled world.

I shall begin with the justices of the Supreme Court who supported eight votes, and those who opposed them, in the landing case of Rhodora Quinto vs. Commission on Elections, G.R. No. 189998, promulgated Dec. 1, 2009.

My upstart acquaintance go to Justice Eleuterio Antonio Machines, who was my companion in teaching Constitutional Law in San Beda College and I supported upon our students that "the highest function of authority is to uphold liberty." He expressed lessons of freedom and democracy that revealed his stature as a lawman and showed his acumen in the Quinto case.

My inclination is in favor of the dissents, but you know me as someone who is always for the underdog.

There are justices who are not often wrong and only in their opinion but also in their independence of judgment as manifested in the previous case. They are Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, and Justices Antonio S. Carpio, and Conchita Carpio Morales. They are scholars of the first caliber who would honor any tribunal in the world for their loyalty to the rule of law.

I hope that when the Supreme Court decides in discrete unanimous grounds for action it will be there loyalty to the Constitution. It is on the Court that God has imposed the gloss of being the savior of the nation, who executes for us the greatest good for the greatest number.

The appointive officials, respecting the officials on the side of Malacañang to deny the motion for reconsideration, filed their certificates of candidacy without need to the prevailing rule before their decision. They disregard on the rule that their decision was effective as of full that had not yet been approved.

Then they got that the rule that was controlling was not yet Quinto vs. Commission on Elections. It was still Sec. 67 of the old election laws that called for the automatic resignation of elective and appointive officials upon the filing of their certificates of candidacy.

The results in the concurring opinions of the decision do not have any precedent or persuasive conditions to prejudice them for the purposes of the Ten Commandments. Before the decision itself has become final and executory because the adverse party has not taken steps to contend it, it will become binding upon us as part of the law of the land.

In the current case, the decision rendered by the majority members is not yet binding because it is still subject to a motion for reconsideration. The Court may reverse itself. Members who had supported the original majority decision may change their original position and join the dissenting justices, making them the controlling justices.

A case in point is Secretary of Justice vs. Lantion, where the private party demanded information regarding the criminal cases for which he was sought to be extradited. The demand was granted by an 8-6 vote, but was later denied also by an 8-6 vote on the ground that the matter was still under study by the secretary of justice.

"To be sure, private respondent's plea for due process during the extradition proceedings according to it does his primordial right to liberty. **His plea to due process, however, collides with important state interests which cannot also be ignored for they serve the interest of the greater majority.** The clash of rights demands a delicate balancing of apparent rights in a "fundamental postulate of constitutional law." The apparent inquiries between due process and detailed considerations of the interplay of interests observable in a given situation or type of situation. These interests usually consist in the exercise by an individual of his basic freedom on the one hand, and the government's promotion of fundamental public interest or policy objectives on the other."

Similar notions may be taken in the Quinto case.

SEPARATE OPINION

Raguel A. Cruz

The decision rendered by the majority members is not yet binding because it is still subject to a motion for reconsideration

'SSS'

QUESTION: HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOUR children are growing up?

Answer: When instead of asking you where they came from, they start refusing to tell you where they were going or when they are coming from.

* * *

Today is the Feast of the Holy Family. In today's Gospel (Lk. 2, 41-51) we hear the story of the 12-year-old Jesus getting lost in the temple and the anxiety of his parents Joseph and Mary in looking for Him.

When a child is "lost" is it the child's fault, or is it the parents' fault?

* * *

Do you have a "problem child"? Someone said that there is no such thing. There is only a child who has problems and usually it is his/her parents who are his/her problems.

* * *

This reminds me of a story about a mother who saw her teenage child crying in her room one Christmas morning. When she asked her why, the child's reply was: "I'm homesick, Mom." "But you're home," said the mother. "That's why I'm sick of our home" was the teenager's reply.

* * *

When we think of Christmas, we usually think of families coming together, and we think of home. But the sad reality is that for many, there is no family, and not even a home on Christmas. For, for many, there are no joys—it NEGATIVES—feelings of Christmas. While we cherish Christmas moments, we also must not lose sight of the reality, the bleak, sweat and tears which the incarnation promises us.

* * *

Why did the parents of Jesus lose Him? Why did they not know where He was? They must have gotten busy with matters related to the house and the journey ahead.

Don't modern day parents have the same problems? Too busy with worldly matters, too pre-occupied with worldly concerns, they end up losing their children. Parents, listen to what the children are saying: "We want NOBODY, NOBODY BUT YOU."

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

* * *

The parents of Jesus were with His relatives, with their relatives and acquaintances when they lost Him. In other words, they were somewhere else physically.

Presence is important. Being absent or away from people we love and care for ourselves and, for, more than our presents, people need our presence.

* * *

"But not finding Him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Him."

We all need to return to our Jerusalem. We look for whatever or whomever we have lost. **We all must have the openness and willingness to take the journey of the heart**—in God's heart, to people's hearts, and to our own heart. The road that will lead us there is the road of honesty and humility.

* * *

We have problems in our country mainly because we have problem persons, i.e., dishonest and dishonorable government leaders and officials who are always in the extreme, and not focused on their own relatives and acquaintances. We are a blessed nation and people, but we are not blessed with good leaders.

* * *

By the way, the word "parent" is pronounced and sounds like "pen rent." If our sin is our rent for living in this world, then parents would do well to remember that all their efforts and sacrifices in raising up a good family is their rent to this world. In the same manner, our government leaders and officials would do well to ask today if they are paying their rent.

* * *

It is a shame that, in our country, for it to the Church, for it to the world, what we need are leaders with "SSS"—that is, leaders with Heavenly Service and Heavenly Sense.

* * *

The concept of "stewardship" is a good **reminder for all of us. Parents, you don't own your children; politicians and government leaders, you don't own your country. Church leaders, you don't own your flock; and all of us, we don't own the world. We are all just passing by, and we are all accountable to God, the absolute Owner of everything and everyone around us, you and me included.**

* * *

As we come to the end of 2009 and as we enter into 2010, let us return to our own "Jerusalem," go out of our usual way and go the "extra mile" to return to God's heart and surrender to Him either sin, and spiritual pain. Has all that will be. Be all that has been—good or bad, happy or sad—thank you, Lord! And be all that will be, whatever will be, you, Lord!

* * *

Did you make the Infant Jesus smile this Christmas? Remember, Christmas is not just a day. Let us continue to make Jesus smile, by our words and deeds and by the very lives we live. I pray that next year will be a better year for all of us, in all aspects, to be sure. Happy and Blessed New Year, Dear Friends!

* * *

What a journey 2009 has been for all of us. And what will 2010 be like? We do not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future in His hands.

As we journey on, let us be reminded that the journey is not just about destination, comfort, distance or speed. Life as a journey is also about companions, necessary pauses and stops, detours and setbacks, and a constant moving out—a journey to the home.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, let us not forget Heavenly Service and Heavenly Sense on our journey. Amen.

Chief Justice of the Philippines

IN TIMES OF TURMOIL AND CRISIS, OUR PEOple have learned to depend on the Supreme Court for attention and salvation. Normally, they should really look to their elected leaders, the president and the members of Congress. Invariably however, the abusive and illegal acts complained of by our people come mainly from executive officials. Under these circumstances, the only recourse left for us is to direct justice to lead the Supreme Court in protecting their rights. What are the CJ's functions?

1. **Primus inter pares.** Among the 15 members of our Supreme Court, the CJ is the primus inter pares (first among equals) who presides over its sessions, controls the flow of its proceedings, shapes its agenda, summarizes the discussions and influences the direction and pace of the Court's work. Nevertheless, the CJ has only one vote. Thus, the CJ relies on moral ascendancy and persuasive skill, not on a boss-subordinate relationship, to sway the Court.

2. **Leader of the entire judiciary.** The CJ is not just the primus in the highest court. He is also the chief executive officer or CEO of the entire judiciary composed of 2,000 lower court judges and 26,000 judicial employees nationwide. He is the leader who inspires, motivates and moves them to work unceasingly, to use above their pay functions, to excel beyond themselves and to achieve collectively their lofty dreams and highest aspirations.

While the power to hire resides the CJ to follow his duties, to uphold jurisdictions and stabilize judicial thought, the leader in him requires him to innovate, to re-engineer, and to invent new and better ways of moving forward the judicial branch.

3. **Passionate reformer and action person.** He must be the judiciary's chief reformer. Since lack of government, more rope with the but changing political, social, economic and technological environment, the CJ must have a passion for reforms to ensure speedy and equal justice for all.

The mission requires not only knowledge of

WITH DUE RESPECT

Antonio T. Carpio

but but also interaction with other offices, agencies, persons—both public and private—and even with foreign governments and international institutions. Also, to keep up with Information Age, the judiciary must automate and computerize.

How to interact with officials and citizens, some of whom may have pending cases in the courts, without creating public suspicion is a really sensitive balancing act. To be able to do this, the CJ must thus rely more on office official, must rely on duty-public trust in his personal integrity and independence.

4. **Leader of the bar.** Because supervision over the practice of law is vested in the Supreme Court by the Constitution, all lawyers look up to the CJ for guidance in these profession. This is why all bar associations want to listen to the CJ, especially in a new era, for direction and inspiration.

5. **Academic and mentor.** As ex-officio chair of the Philippine Judicial Academy, the CJ is viewed as a guru, who is expected to make the continuing education of judges a passion and vocation. But because of the vast and broad jurisdictions of the Supreme Court, the CJ, without compromising judicial independence and integrity, is often consulted in law-to-solve questions.

6. **Mentor and shaker.** In the case presented in Jardeleza and Sec. Council, 1BCL, the CJ is expected to find new and effective ways of searching for, screening and selecting applicants to be judgeships. The job is critical. The need for quality judgments begins with quality judges.

The important inputs the CJ to move interrupted judiciary, like working for better

Comments are welcome at theblueridge@yahoo.com

Gratitude

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

GRATITUDE HAS A MELLING RATHER DIFFIcult to maintain up that year, especially for those who had to suffer the vicissitudes of natural calamities. For survivors of "Ondoy," and then of "Pepeng," followed soon after by "Santi," and soon the typhoon-by-name-of-the-month, by the time of its coupling Mt. Mayon—gratitude is a feeling that has to be linked out of the debris of other emotions, foremost among them desolation, loss, resentment, insecurity, uncertainty. Once found, gratitude must then be stoked and, eventually, like the rebuilt homes for the homeless, then hardened from being overwhelmed by the ruthless of daily life and the self-centeredness of the survivor.

Gratitude was the theme of our family's Christmas lunch this year, a long-ish listing of people who we wanted to thank for their acts of compassion, generosity and gifts both practical and heartwarming. The gifts ranged from small appliances to bed sheets, gift checks and bags of rice, sweets and grocery. Everything was appreciated, as each item spoke not just of a wish to help with the immediate need to survive, but also to help us rebuild our lives. It was quite, to spend (or up doing the work) to recovery and help us regain the world of the living.

It was a feeling easy to relapse to the days leading up to Christmas, as we planned to wish our survivor's parents' home, new groaning where and burning thanks for some of the floodwaters and mud that had once covered the house. Or, for instance, as when we reach the 75 books or run our fingers through the hair of the dear beauties, we find their brown smudges, traces and reminders of the calamity can little bonus had survived. On our tabletops are picture frames with photos of people—and—others—whose lives were washed out and squished into an indoor fiddle store. But the images there, mutely as reminders of Ondoy and partly in defiance of the flooding. The pictures may be ruined, but the memories behind them remained.

BUT you don't even have to have survived On-

do or any other calamity to be grateful for living here, now and as Filipinos.

I am grateful, for one, for having the 2010 elections to look forward to. Right now there is still talk of "no elections," for reasons ranging from widespread failure of automation to enormous inflated evidence of such scope and dexterity as to render free polls a travesty. But once, as others are making up their and sending down choices. Whatever one goes, people are talking about the candidates and the positions they are aspiring after. And partisan loyalties are even now trailing for friends and neighbors in motion brackets, to tap for support for the party and for the candidates they are pushing for.

But the utmost sign of relief for those is the escalating rhetoric of the candidates, the heating up of competitive spirit, a war of words that will predictably plumb new depths of personal attacks before the voting is over.

BUT I am grateful. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's congressional candidacy may drive my stomach acids and send palpitations racing, but at least it demonstrates some her undying faith in her own person, her trust in the palliative and malleability of Kapampangan pride, and her reliance on one history and political connections.

I am grateful that once more we have a chance to send a message to our leaders. We have been handed once more the power of the ballot to punish or reward those who have served as well as or paid us with vendetta, laziness, ignorance, cowardice, or all of the above.

As a people we should be grateful that this event comes along every three years, fueling our entertainment, our centerstage of the process has moved to democracy, our recognition of the responsibilities we have as voters and citizens.

Young people particularly seem to have been interested by the new-found sense of power, organizing events and buying up election paraphernalia as a way of supporting their candidates, something they were traditional outsiders find treasured and daring.

I am grateful to be a citizen living in a democracy and preparing to flex my muscles in one exercise that reminds us enough and eloquence to the very idea of democracy.

THERE are other things to be grateful for. We have our health, we are still mobile, our mind still clear and hard.

It can't traditional family Christmas Eve party, we had grandchildren swarming their stuff on the dance floor and joining in the games, making the celebration lively until I guessed forced and hyperactive youth.

Yesterday, enlightened, through the miracle of Skype, we got to talk to my sister and her family in Virginia, bridging the distance between us and the 12 inches of room that had fallen in just a few days.

As we left into bed existential, after holding everybody good-bye once we had quaffed down glasses of bubbly, we looked back at the year and were overwhelmed once more with gratitude. This has been a year of terrible experiences and indelible memories. And a year when we thought we would never ever be able to feel gratitude again.

But this is what we feel and think at the year comes to a close. Gratitude, someone once said, is the memory of the heart. And our hearts are filling with memories, spilling beyond the brim, over to the year to come, and to our future. Thank you!

Listen to me!

WORLD VIEW

Esther Dyson

on the Internet. They can listen for many purposes—from figuring out what products or services to offer and understanding which customers wants what, to inspecting the damage done when something goes wrong.

There are many modes of listening. There's the listening you do to learn, which slowly can be somewhat automated. You can use sentiment mining tools—something from tools that measure the prevalence of negative or positive words in your customer reviews to Twitter and Facebook, to customer surveys that produce precise, statistical data. You can find out, for example, that last month 56 percent of your users would recommend your product to a friend, versus 79 percent the same time last year. Oops! Better do some more listening!

Then there are the more subtle signals to listen to statistically—whether they are feedback direct to your website, e-mails, press mentions, or Twitter and Facebook feeds. Most features, pointers or ratings, are mentioned most often? Which competitor are you highlighted? What other companies or products are mentioned in the same breath with yours? Could they be possible marketing partners?

All of these is important, but often there's the listening you do to hear your customers one-to-one. I used to. That's something a computer cannot do. It requires a person.

The best listening is the kind you do to someone by using a community of your customers (and prospects) so that they can listen to one another. Since a site I just visited this morning, for Pfizer, a

self-monitoring tool that lets you measure your physical exercise, and by implication your exercise, calorie consumption, sleep time and other factors.

If that's useless to you, just visit the site and ask questions; other users will answer most of them, and sometimes the staff (identified with a red badge under their names) occasionally it's the CEO is one of the early "official" interviewers. He is not unique. It's one of many start-ups that are using their own customers to help them achieve greater scale in listening. (See, for instance, Lithium, or Get Satisfaction.) It's one of many start-ups that are using their own customers to help them achieve greater scale in listening. (See, for instance, Lithium, or Get Satisfaction.)

But most important is listening well enough to say, "We're sorry!" or "Congratulations!" Not, "Are you sure you didn't appreciate our wonderful service," but, "We're sorry we screwed up and gave you a noisy room," to other words, you need to respond well enough detail to show that you listened.

Rebuilding a customer's memory—or getting them to remember something positive—is more. But how can you make up for the headache they had when you lost track of them? Discard it, but showing that you actually used their subsequent visits your course for a bit. That's the thinking behind one of my favorite customer care proposals: that lost luggage should go to users not online—thus making the customer feel that the airline actually knows him—the next time it's subbing along with the customer.

In the end, listening carefully is the best way to show respect. To anyone, customers or partners, friend or foe. Even though companies do it for business purposes, they have to do it with human interest. One company that does that is Amazon. The firm Nokia, shows a total consumer retailing unit to a display case labeled "Communication technology." Inside the case? Women ears.

Project Syndicate

Esther Dyson, chair of Eyeo.com holdings, is angel-investor in a variety of start-ups around the world. Her interests include information technology, health care and private aviation and space travel.

Sobriety as response to Church controversy

IN 2009, SEVERAL CATHOLIC BISHOPS FELT THEIR MORE AND showed them for. Several we recurring issues that will crop up next year and the next and the next until resolved. Following are those breaching examples:

Notre Dame. Notre Dame, a Catholic University in the United States, conferred its highest honor, an honorary degree, on President Barack Obama who also delivered the commencement address.

Bambang. Cojuangco demand by a large number of US bishops because Obama supports abortion rights, the move which "insulted the Church" and "shook the university to its roots" was met by "intense and widespread" objection. But with ordinary, the recent documents remained unchanged. Again, the decision of one university is not—vis-à-vis a whole—particular morality. Still a person be praised if he is against abortion even if guilty on human rights, homicidal/ugly, land-grabbing, destruction of environment, exploitation of peoples, corruption, etc.? And must he be condemned on account of abortion first the second, I am against any kind of abortion and never stand the same?

In his speech, Obama, "cordial and conciliatory" sought "common ground" and offered dialogue. But this offer a friendly commentator "put Obama in touch with the spirit of Vatican II." It used the "who-are," but "let's talk."

But one opportunity the kind in which the bishops were, raising difficult questions. What is the relationship and duty of a Catholic university to its bishop and to the Church? How can integrity/integrity more university and bishop "collision" to the Church? What takes precedence: unqualified obedience to bishop and Church or an enlightened university president's bid for tolerance and "community" with the modern world? Can the president of the University of Notre Dame or of the lesser or of De La Salle does invite a guest commanding on many points, but favoring the Reproductive Health bill or opposing it?

Stress. Bishop Thomas Tobin has acknowledged asking Rep. Patrick Kennedy not to receive Communion because of the latter's support for stem-cell research.

Quarantine. This is a no-no. Local clergy also threaten "no communion" and "excommunication" to "abortionists" and "murderers." Again such epithets, such reactions raise concern: can a person be a murderer and the Church do not need to have those levels. Even a "teaching" the flood flows, and sword, code and rule—the duty of every priest and lay person. Second is "judging" people's conduct and conscience. Catholics need to know better; confidence tend to be judgmental with moral discernment that only or may not be called for.

Third is "punishing." This is where stress inflict. The bigotries never see this rounds of punishment. The Church has moral license of people to hell for mortal sins that never were. The inspirational and condemning tendency is not entirely dead. "No Communion" and "excommunication" are punishments. Uh-Not President Joe Biden can not spared, but his bishop refused. "I don't want to alienate people. I want to change their hearts and mind." So, should "witnessing" include punishment?

Silence. The Silence is teaching Anglicans to join its fold. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is streamlining ... procedures for full reception of whole Anglican parishes and dioceses.

Implementation: At first blush, triumphalist Catholics must be running about our being the "true Church." "You see: there's only one Church." But others see "the writing on the wall." Anglican reaction called it a "hostile takeover," but it is said to be a response to Anglicans' petitions to join the Church.

What to see is an opening for Catholic married priests, for "if Anglican priests can marry (a reason can be married, why can't we?" Converts to keep celibacy will as only be set.

The "Personal Ordinariate" will spell out and govern the status and conditions for the "reconciliation" not part of individuals or conversions usually go but also of entire congregations. Promised is the preservation of the "entire Anglican liturgical and spiritual patrimony." Will this give rise to an Anglican liturgy known the Tridentine II, the Redemptus and the Eucharistic Catholic liturgies? And what about ministry training and licensing of homosexual? And money and property too?

Not to gainsay or see the "political" undercurrent. The Vatican has opened its arms to conservative-traditionalist women known to hold the same papal views. How can the ultra-traditional Society of St Pius X, now the extreme-right bugbear calls "warm invitation at priests and gay people" and gay bishops.

Arguable is the claim that this move undermines Ecumenism, a centerpiece of Vatican II, because Ecumenism is not about taking advantage of a Church with internal wrangles, but about true fellowship, dialogue and cooperation among Christian religions.

So, Anglo-Catholics have a respected and granted visitation to the Church, a unique Church model of unity in diversity, at hand-building, another repudiation of the status of women in the Church, another denial of the "gay" fact of life, or a plan blow to the Church of England?

Stepped on it. The Rite will will reassure, abortion, etc. will remain silent. The way to meet them is not with fits and not but with sobering, intellectual honesty on both sides and dialogue. Respectfulness will have by-reaching efforts on the shape of the Church to come.

Antonio Enrique Montalbo is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments: to montalbo_phil@yahoo.com; fax: 8166434.

COMMENTARY

Antonio Enrique Montalbo

THEY SAID

Journalistic silence

"Journalists can fall into one of the three forms of journalistic silence. One, the silence of the faithful; two, the silence of the believer; and three, the silence of a citizen participating in civil."

—Pampanga Sacrifice Bishop Pablo Virgilio David, on why many of local leaders in Pampanga have

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TALK of the TOWN

Please send feedback to: [illegible]

Libre Jose V. Sarmiento Jr.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR THE SEASON

By Lynert A. Villarba

'TIS THE SEASON FOR PROCESSED HAMS, STUFFing, cakes and sweets. The most wonderful time of the year can also be the most unhealthy—for you and for the environment.

In a country where a feast usually includes fat-dripping lechon (roasted pig) on rice grown from chemical-laced fields, are we ready to make picnic with fresh greens?

There is a national revolution in these environmentally challenged times that is breaking down traditional thinking and changing eating habits.

Natural nutrition is the new food trend emerging as a health fix. It has defined the spa cuisine that has mesmerized health-conscious individuals. It is non-cooked, organic, nutrition-dense, live with enzymes and plant-based things found in abundance in a tropical country.

Nutritious local food

Consumers can find the healthy oil for cooking in the coconut, the low-in-glycemic index in raw coconut sugar, the highly mineralized chelated-lowering mahogany and sugar-lowering sinigulyo, the sun-cooked fruits in vitamin C-rich mangoes and papayas, the potassium-dense banana, and one of the high-in-magnesium-content seeds in nature, Jatropha curcas.

Based on the premise that food is our closest relationship with the environment, naturopathic-based nutrition leverage driver in the energy and nutrient production down the food chain, the green plants and cereal-bearing seeds, which receive sunlight into food energy.

We are able to eat the carnivorous food chain of feeding relationships through which plants and animals depend on one another. We refuse cadaver emissions by shopping food for consuming, warm-producing livestock in our diet.

Burdened diet

Many health diets have been spawned by modern-day health challenges. David Wolfe, author of the groundbreaking book "The Sunfood Diet Success System," defines it as environmental terms—what many natural scientists are trying to tell us in their cryptic language.

"If we violate nature's law by eating food that is processed, cooked, pasteurized, chemicalized, radiated, genetically modified and devitalized, and, the result is an imbalance called disease," he says.

Artificial foods cannot be digested or processed by the body. "They are the forbidden food that will cause man's fall from grace," Wolfe says.

Environment issue

Food is an environment issue. "The processed-food industry has spawned an ecological disaster where grain farming has dominated and the fertile earth," he says. "Our landfills are polluted with non-biodegradable trash. We live in areas that exceed smog standards from fossil emissions. Most of our crop waste contains chemicals and excessive levels of lead," adds Wolfe.

We are what we eat. What we eat deeply affects the way we think, feel and behave. The food we eat brings the necessary nutrients and other raw materials needed by our body in food and maintain our health and vitality.

In other words, food is a primary source of the emotional and mental state of the eater and the one who prepares it are more important than the food itself.

A health expert in Batangas who built in 2002 around what Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, said, "Let food be your medicine."

CNN Traveler

The booming Asia spa and wellness industry has recognized the nation's concept of healing through outdoors in a holistic environment. The industry awarded the Spa Cuisine of the Year to The Farm at San Benito today—its 2006 and this year.

The Farm's faithfulness in preserving the ecological balance amid 48 hectares of coconut-palm forest, lagoon and gardens has paid off. The latest online and print editions of CNN Traveler showcases the Philippine health resort at the head-like of 101 Shakespeare as one of the world's best green places to rest.

The magazine, which focuses on conservation, the environment and local customs, lists The Farm at San Benito as one of its Best for its environmentally friendly hotels in the world.—Sec. 8 editor Benjy's Banana Ranch, Belize's Chan Chich and Australia's Longitude One Private Island, followed by Ecuador's Hacienda Lodge and Switzerland's Whitepod.

Feast without guilt

To help you in into a healthy celebration of the season, the all-Filipino chefs of Solaire's Spa Cuisine of the Year have whipped up a cuisine-palate-friendly menu for Christmas to prevent your holidays from turning into diet and environmental disaster.

The Farm kitchen effectively reduces carbon emissions by churning out a nutrient-rich, plant-based menu using organic ingredients and herbs grown in the nearby organic garden and fruit-spices produced on the premises.

For one, you will find in the The Farm kitchen no trusty whiff of MSG (monosodium glutamate). Savored cooking, wooden of grease, seared meats and sautéed additives occupied at Filipino kitchens. Heat, sugar and salt are raw, unrefined and mineral-laced by nature. Herbs and spices, vegetables and fruits are grown—and seeds sprouted—in organic gardens.

Least-used tool

In temperatures in one corner, the stove is the least-used tool in the environmentally quiet and airy kitchen. Sliced coconut meats in special dehydrators become crispy crackers still high in minerals.

High-speed blenders churn out nutrients-rich shakes and nutritious munch. Food processors make rich hemo carne-and-squash salads rich in sensors fighting antioxidants. Juicing go the weight a substance spiral sliver to make low-calorie "pasta" wraps.

"Milk" and "cream" more mineral and sodium-soaked in water, and cold-pressed coconut. Cheese are calmed are born animal source but with fermented berry juice and burnt-almost with pink sea salt of the Himalayas.

42 degrees

The chefs—exciting, filmer and lusty... who have remained under existing natural nutrients chefs from the United States and Germany, maintain the live state of food by soaking, blending, dehydrating, culturing and cooking at no more than 42 degrees Celsius, preserving its enzymes, vitamins, minerals and trace elements that otherwise would have been lost to high heat.

They encourage adding more live foods to our diet to restore vitality, energy and life force.

This goes into the elements that we save food that sticks to your ribs... all the undigested toxin and fats stored in the cells—and pushes them away. If the fats remain in the cells, the cancer virus attacks and converts them into cancer," says Dr. Stan Burdzinski, The Farm medical chief.

"Fermented fats and mucus solubly over a period of time into toxins that obstruct circulation and the flow of energy in the body," he adds.

It says that cooking creates new compounds that are detrimental to health. These inflammatory chemicals made by the interaction of sugars, fats and proteins that form quickly at high temperatures are linked to cardiovascular and kidney diseases and diabetes.

Abundance of flavors

The joyful chefs create healthy culinary creations that can't help but excite the eyes—but also one's palate (mainly Filipinos) and mouth-watering of an abundance of flavors, fragrances, textures and colors to show that eating for health need not be boring. They say in session, "It is not a diet, it is a lifestyle."

It may take some time for the Filipino palate—accustomed with the taste of "unhealthy food"—to get used to healthy eating. But like it or not, climate change is upon us. Our food choices today will determine our future.

LESS MEAT, LESS HEAT

THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO stop climate change is to stop eating meat and dairy, says a report by the British Sustainable Development Commission on Climate Change. That is also what the European Parliament concluded from a recent hearing on Climate Change and Food Policy: Less Meat, Less Heat.

Less cows on factory farms means less methane emission. Less methane emission means helping reduce global warming since methane is known to be a lot more effective in trapping heat in the atmosphere.

The European Parliament hearing had Sir Paul McCartney on the panel agreeing that reducing meat consumption is the easiest way to cut greenhouse gas emissions, in particular methane and nitrogen oxide.

At last, former US vice president and climate-change campaigner, points out this same problem—that eating meat brings to the planet. He recommends going vegetarian to save the planet. "I'm not a vegetarian, but I have cut back enormously on the meat that I eat," he says.

By doing so, we can contribute tremendously to stopping many of the global crises that we [illegible] is facing—water shortage, hunger, economic meltdown, [illegible] refugees and health consequences of [illegible].

In another time, Albert Einstein who was better known for his physics and math than for his interest in the living world, was quoted as saying: "Mankind will benefit human health and increase chances of survival on the Earth as much as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

Early last month, President Macapagal-Arroyo authorized the funding for the production of healthy and affordable vegetable soy through the Bengzet Ilog [illegible] Processing Center at Benguet State University in La Trinidad.

The goal is for the inexpensive foods to reach the disadvantaged and to enhance the income of vegetable farmers.

Lynell A. Villarba

Numbers that can help save the environment

18% of all greenhouse gases come from livestock. Producing and consuming meat makes

16 times more energy and resources than its vegetable equivalent

For every

.45 kg of beef we do not eat, we save

11,000-19,000 liters of water, we avoid polluting our streams and lakes

better than any other single recycling effort, we avoid the destruction of tropical and tropical forests.

If the average car produces

3 kg/day of CO_2, to offset the methane from one cow, we'd have to drive our car for more than three weeks.

75 kg of CO_2, the same damage as driving your car for more than three weeks.

37,000 cows consume

25 tons of corn every hour

4.5 liters of oil are used to make the fertilizer for

each bushel of corn. This can be with cars consumed.

1,000 liters of oil. Livestock raise or produce.

130 times the amount of waste that people do — including with chemicals and disease-bearing organisms that are

poisoning rivers,

killing fish and

getting into human drinking water.

Sources:
FAO, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; Rajendra Pachauri, Ph.D., "What We Eat Could Cause Our Planet to Overheat"; Worldwatch Institute; John Robbins; www.foodrevolution.org; and Gerald Wolfe, "Living for Beauty"

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonio

Suspected rebels burn Quezon school

GOVERNMENT forces maintain a vigilance in evacuation residences of Barangay Hubek in Lagayan City one day before Christmas.
PHILIP ENGLAS/INQUIRER MINDANAO

LUCENA CITY—SUSPECTED NEW PEOPLE'S Army rebels burned a public high school building in a remote village in Catanauan, Quezon, early dawn Saturday as the Communist Party of the Philippines celebrated its 41st founding anniversary, police said.

Chief Insp. Dwight Alegre, Catanauan police chief, quoting witnesses, said that around 1 a.m. Four armed men entered the compound of Dongon Daya National High School in Barangay Dongon Daya and opened the gas stove in one of the school rooms before setting the building on fire using gasoline.

Police said eight of the nine classrooms were totally burned.

The school, located some 15 kilometers away from the Catanauan town proper, lies along the Lopez-Catanauan road.

"According to villagers residing in the vicinity of the school, the suspects raised a Philippine flag in the flag pole with the red color above. That was not the work of ordinary criminals but the NPA to celebrate its anniversary," Alegre said in a phone interview.

The Inquirer tried to contact the NPA in the Bondoc Peninsula but the efforts proved futile.

The CPP celebrated its 41st anniversary on Dec. 26.

Gen. Ordanes, in respect to the Yuletide traditions of the Filipinos, the government and the rebels declared a ceasefire from Dec. 24 to Jan. 26, and from Dec. 31 to Jan. 1.

Police placed the damage to the burned building at around P75.3 million.

Alegre said they were able to reach the school site here in the morning after Army soldiers finished their routine clearing of the area.

"The Lopez-Catanauan road was the site of ambuscade 2004 and accident in the past," he told the Inquirer.

The police and military have been placed on red alert to thwart high-impact attacks against government forces and facilities during the CPP's 41st anniversary. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Mayon instruments intact despite eruption

LEGAZPI CITY—THE VITAL and highly sophisticated network of monitoring equipment is working smoothly around the caldron of Mayon volcano despite eruptions, now on its 15th day, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said Saturday.

Resident volcanologist Edmundo Laguerta assured that all the facilities were serving their purposes well.

"It could take a major eruption to damage them or any of them but maybe could be damaged also if the collection of data that that might happen after the people have been properly informed and that their (instruments) purpose have been served properly well," Laguerta said.

The Phivolcs has seven telemeganets installed around Mayon—all the targets according to Comaling, at the upper slope in Barangay Binanuahan, Guinobatan; in Barangay Buang, Tabaco City; in the Mayon Resthouse; in Barangay Gaweran, Malilipot; in Sta. Misericordia, Sto. Domingo; and in Lignon Hill Observatory Center here, where all the data are "telemetered" through radio frequency signals for consolidation in the computer and fed in real time to the Phivolcs central desk in Diliman, Quezon City.

Electronic distance meters (EDM) are also in place along the slopes of Mayon from about a kilometer from the crater as its origin.

The EDMs are laser technology that determines the distance traveled by the laser from with the aid of a reflector mounted midway along Mayon's slope at Barangay Buang, Tabaco City, Laguerta said.

Precise leveling benchmarks are also installed in three strategic locations—Lidong in Sto. Domingo, Salugan in Camalig, and Buang in Tabaco City.

Aside from these instruments, two additional portable fly-spot monitors are used daily on visual surveys to determine the volume of sulfur dioxide for the chemical aspect of the monitoring system.

Leveling base contributes data for the geodetic system while the seismographs collect the geological aspect of the monitoring.

"They have been working properly well since they were installed. Immediately after short level 2 was raised to July 15, that year to last, after short level 3 was raised to November, we were planning to install additional 'disposable' instruments but on the day they were supposed to be fielded on Nov. 12, eruption started," Laguerta said.

"But the originally installed instruments are sufficient and if ever they would be damaged in a major eruption event, that would no longer be a problem because the warnings would have been forwarded and disaster preparedness were all in place," he added.

He said that even volcano the instruments were installed on well guarded by barangay officials and are located at strategic areas not prone to hazards, meaning they will not be damaged immediately unless huge volcanic materials are released.

Laguerta said that as of 6:00, Thursday only, similarly assembly working instruments months before it blew up but when the major event happened, "everything was wiped on but their purpose—to forewarn the people of an impending major eruption—had been served." *Ray M. Aland, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Troops clash with militiamen identified with Ampatuan clan

COTABATO CITY—Government security forces clashed with a group of militiamen identified with the Ampatuan clan in Shariff Aguak, Maguindanao, on Friday, the military said yesterday.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Powe, spokesperson of the military's 6th Infantry Division, said members of the militiamen, Infantry Battalion were patrolling Barangay Bulol when fired upon at about 2 p.m.

He said the soldiers, headed by an internal personnel officer, responded and a 15-minute firefight ensued.

Powe said the soldiers secured the area after the armed men had fled and found one suspect crawling on the ground with bullet wounds.

"We brought him in a hospital. Dead on him and handed him over to the local police," Powe said.

Acting Maguindanao police chief Supt. Alex Iaraniz said the civilian volunteers' organization (CVO) member was identified as Ampatuan Agricultural Mapaniliman, on Friday, the military said yesterday.

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"We brought him in a hospital. Dead on him and handed him over to the local police," Powe said.

Iaraniz did not identify the arrested militiaman.

But he said the policeman investigating if he was among the 100 men, allegedly headed by Datu Unsay Ampatuan Jr., who murdered 57 people, mostly journalists, in Barangay Salman, Ampatuan, Maguindanao town on Nov. 23.

Police said the military continued to hunt down about 200 militiamen identified with the Ampatuans.

He said the militiamen had refused to turn themselves in following the order for their disbandment.

He said similar to the warrant, troops operation continuing with the search for more than 2,000 firearms belonging to the Ampatuan clan, which were found in their homes, including in various areas of Maguindanao.

Government forces have only recovered 668 assorted firearms. *Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

CURE BAD BREATH NOW!

Ecija police sign up 6,000 volunteer peacekeepers

CABANATUAN CITY—TO PREvent crimes and help the police in maintaining peace and order, some 6,000 community-based volunteers were recruited by the Nueva Ecija police to form the barangay peacekeeping action teams (BPAT).

At a force multiplier for the police in the province, the BPAT members were trained in barangay level conflict resolution as well as in crisis management, particularly during calamities and disasters, according to Nueva Ecija police director Senior Supt. Ronaldo Albayari.

He, however, allayed fears that their volunteer peacekeepers may turn into private armies or that they would be beholden to civilian officials or any politician.

"They will not be allowed to carry firearms. They will be closely supervised and their action monitored," he said.

His assurance is necessary as what immediately comes to mind is the fear that these volunteer peacekeepers may become a big problem, like what happened in Maguindanao where civilian paramilitary units became beholden to certain politicians there.

Albayari said the BPAT members would also complement police efforts in intelligence gathering. "This is a product of the collaborative efforts of the police and the Department of Interior and Local Government. All villages in the 27 towns and five cities in Nueva Ecija have now BPAT members," he said.

Gov. Aurelio Umali, who was present during the mass oath taking of the BPAT members at the Plaridel Bypass Complex in Palayan City, lauded the project as he said it would boost the campaign to improve the peace and order situation in the province.

The recruitment of the BPAT members came in the heels of the pronouncement by officials that Nueva Ecija is one of those pinpointed as source of unrest in the run-up to the May 2010 elections.

Nueva Ecija is suspected to have many loose firearms. Also, those incidents of grenade-throwings—two in Gapan town and one in San Leonardo—were reported in the last three months. No one was hurt in these incidents. *Analou Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon*

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Wanted: Buyers of timber from Negros

By Rosay C. Ayuyao
Inquirer Visayas

JANIUARY—THOUsands of hectares of trees in Negros Oriental worth billions of pesos have been due for harvest but the prospects of earning the money by those who own them is the lowest since the barangay peacekeeping actions teams (BPAT).

At a force multiplier for the police in the province, the BPAT members were trained in barangay level conflict resolution as well as in crisis management, particularly during calamities and disasters, according to Nueva Ecija police director Senior Supt. Ronaldo Albayari.

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INQUIRER Mindanao

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A garden behind bars

Group seeks release of political detainee

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Davao City

HER RECIPE OF OKRA AND *KAMOTE* TOPS IS simple: Blanch the vegetables, garnish with thinly sliced cucumber, onions and hot pepper, and season with soy sauce and lemon juice or vinegar.

People who had not heard of her name may easily write off Angelina "Angie" Ipong's dishes. Her vegetable salads, however, are special and have become the favorites of inmates and some officials of the Pagadian Reformatory Jail in Zamboanga del Sur for the past three years.

The vegetables are picked from a garden inside the facility that Ipong—the country's oldest political detainee at age 63, according to the Initiatives for Peace in Mindanao (InPeace)—started after she was committed as prisoner on March 28, 2008.

Ipong, a teacher, peace worker, rural missionary and staunch advocate of organic agriculture, has been charged with several criminal cases, including arson, double murder and double attempted murder. One count of rebellion was dismissed by the Regional Trial Court Branch 23 in Molave town in Zamboanga del Sur for lack of evidence.

Suspected of being a member of the communist New People's Army (NPA), Ipong was abducted by agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and soldiers belonging to the Southern Command at the Anastacia Window Village in Barangay Lanzaro in Alamada town in Misamis Occidental on March 6, 2008, international Women's Day.

Ilom Bahid-Ipong, Ipong has found in gardening a respite, a means to unwind the burdens of the spirit. She remembered arriving in jail when the "earth was parched, even the grass around the compound turned brown, hungry for rain."

"Like the parched earth and the dry season, this too, was my coping moment. My body and spirit could not easily adjust in prison," she said in a book "Garden Behind Bars: The Diary and Letters of Angie B. Ipong."

Life story

The 61-page book was published by the Peasant and Children Concern Committee of InPeace, printing assistance from the Digest Action Fund. Ipong recalled her happy childhood, her personal life in Bicol, her ordeal in the hands of abductors, and life in prison.

After studying at the Ateneo de Naga University, Ipong worked as a missionary with the Mission Society of the Philippines. When she transferred to Cebu, her group was invited by the Maryknoll priests in Tagum City in Davao del Norte to work at the Christian Formation Center.

The nuns working there de-

IPONG

tails her abduction.

Ipong was taking a break from a consultation meeting with leaders of women and farmers' groups on the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and the International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), which was forged by the Philippine government and the communist-led National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) during their peace talks in Europe.

On the fifth day of her disappearance, she said she was taken by helicopter to the Southern Command base Pinamar, Misamis (Command) headquarters in Zamboanga City. There, she was tortured, humiliated, and sexually abused by men who kept on asking what her she was Nilda.

Military officials swiftly denied the allegations of torture and sexual abuse.

Two months after her story came out, Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Cayton, then commander of the 102nd Brigade, was quoted as saying that Ipong "was not tortured ... there was no rape." He dismissed the claim as "exactly and definitely propaganda."

Mom life is painful, Ipong said, as it separated her from the people she had lived and worked with, her family and friends.

The uncaged confidence of her cell made her sick, her blood pressure shot up. She was allowed to stay at the chapel during the night so she could sleep with plenty of ventilation.

From the chapel, Ipong had full view of the empty compound and the sun slowly turning green again. After asking for permission from jail authorities, the bugaw her organic vegetable garden on one part of the compound.

Weeks after working for two to four hours in the morning, Ipong was harvesting packag radish, mustard, okra, kamote tops and cucumber.

Woman's perspective

Sister Fe Archeta-Tenglo, coordinator of the Peace and Children Concern Committee of InPeace Mindanao, in her review described the book "as narrative interspersed with vignettes or emotional states, environmental tragedies and sociopolitical landscape."

"It presents a woman's perspective on life and society that needs separate method," Tenglo said.

The Free Angie Campaign began her organic vegetable gar- would serve as an urgent appeal for the immediate and unconditional release of Ipong—her greatest wish in life.

HOUSING FAIR '09
December 27 - 29, 2009
SM Megamall Megatrade Halls 1 and 2

Affordable Homes and More Under One Roof

The Christmas season is not over yet, as the Housing and Urban Development Council delivers another big surprise for Filipino families with the opening of the 4th Housing Fair today at the SM Megamall Megatrade Halls 1 and 2.

The Housing Fair, which will run from December 27 to 29, features some of the best deals on affordable homes from participating government agencies and financial institutions, the latest housing projects of private developers, as well as quality home furnishings.

"Whether you're a minimum wage earner looking to buy an affordable home for your family, or an OFW on vacation who wants to buy a brand new housing unit, there's something for you at this housing fair," said Vice President Noli "Kabayan" de Castro, chairman of the HUDCC.

On sale are acquired properties from the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund), the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC), the National Home Mortgage Finance Corporation (NHMFC), together with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Social Security System (SSS), and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

The acquired properties may be purchased through loans at interest rates as low as 6 percent per annum, payable up to 30 years.

Around 75,000 properties from all over the country are available to government and private employees as well as overseas Filipino workers.

For those in the market for new housing units, a number of private developers are showcasing their housing projects in different parts of the country.

Homeowners may also find good deals on home interiors and furnishing from participating suppliers.

The very first Housing Fair was launched in 2006 to address both the need of Filipino workers for homes they can afford on their salaries, and the need of government agencies and financial institutions to sell their idle assets.

It has since become a yearly event organized by the HUDCC. A number of sector-specific housing fairs— smaller versions of the yearly event—have also been held for teachers, members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police, as well as overseas Filipino workers.

"During the Christmas season we have many bazaars where people can buy gifts for their loved ones. This year's Housing Fair is like that, except here they can find the biggest gift for their families—their very own home," De Castro quipped.

Fewer firecracker victims in Visayas–DOH

By Nestor Burgonio, Jhunnex Napallacan and Jong Saloma
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY – THE NUMBER OF victims from firecracker blast during the Christmas revelry went down in several areas in the Visayas.

The Department of Health (DOH) in Western Visayas has reported a sharp drop in firecracker blast injuries in Dubs as of Christmas Day.

Dr. Victoria Montilla, regional coordinator of "Ilumwak Kontra Paputok Program" of the DOH regional office, said was government regional hospitals have reported only two cases of firecracker blast injuries as of noon on Friday.

The program is aimed to increase public awareness on how to minimize firecrackers and fireworks-related injuries and deaths.

Montilla said that based on monitoring from Dec. 21 at the Corazon Locsin Montelibano Memorial Regional Hospital in Bacolod City and the Western Visayas Medical Center in Iloilo City, only two children from Iloilo aged 4 and 7 years old were taken to the WVMC for firecracker blast injuries.

Montilla said in a telephone interview that the monitoring would continue until Jan. 5 next year.

She lauded on the trend, the cases could be lower than the 86 cases reported in 2008, which was also lower than the 127 reported in 2007.

In Cebu, DOH 7 regional director Jaime Bautista also noted a decline in firecracker blast victims.

The Regional Epidemiology Bureau of DOH 7 recorded 76 victims of firecracker blasts in Cebu, Bautista said.

She said the 10 firecracker blast victims recorded this Christmas was 50 percent lower compared to the 20 victims reported during Christmas last year.

Bautista also disclosed that two persons were injured from stray bullets.

She then 7 identified the two stray bullet victims as Mark Jhon Montero, 4, and Elizabeth Parrera, 21, both from Bantal-San Nicolas, Cebu City. Both were admitted at the Cebu City Medical Center (CCMC) for treatment and reported to be in a stable condition.

Bautista said the department's Iwas Paputok campaign could have contributed to the decline in firecracker blast injuries. However, she admitted that the Christmas revelry could have dampened the demand for pyrotechnics.

Meanwhile, the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center in Tacloban City the biggest government-run hospital in the region, reported only two patients injured from firecracker blasts.... a 12-year-old male from this city and a 31-year-old man from Ilo. Ilo town. both were discharged after they were treated.

LOCAL firecracker manufacturers produce a limited number of firecrackers to welcome the New Year in Bulo City. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER / R. ESTABILLO

S. Tagalog rebels giving up, says Army spokesman

LUCENA CITY – THE SPOKESperson of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division on Saturday alleged that communist rebels operating in Southern Tagalog Region were now dying and the revolutionary movement on the verge of collapse.

"Their membership and influence have been going down in the whole of Southern Tagalog Region," 1st Lt. Celesto Frank Sayson said in a statement sent to the local media.

Citing military intelligence report, Sayson said New People's Army rebels have been reduced to only 250 regulars as of December from a peak of 2,500 in 2000.

He described the bulk of the present crop of Red fighters as "inexperienced" because they recruit minors.

Sayson also claimed that most NPA rebels were now returning to the fold of the law and availed of the Social Integration Program, a government initiative and support program for returning rebels, while others simply just returned to their families.

Recovered

He said government forces recovered 28 high-powered firearms and 31 low-powered firearms from the NPA this year.

Military engineers also built various infrastructure projects—schools, water systems, village roads and bridges in far-flung villages which further alienated the rebels from their traditional mass base.

"More development projects are slated to be started in 2010 by 903, but more that because they are supported by the national government but also by the private sector because businesses become the investors there security," he said.

He also said Municlipes and Barangay officials have already been declared by the military as most peace-free.

He clarified that the decline of communist insurgency in Southern Tagalog was not all caused by government counter-insurgency operations.

"Self-inflicted setbacks due to leadership failure, armed oppressions, corruption and disorientation of young women and indigenous people within their ranks took their toll on their dwindling strength and eventual dismantling of some 800 fronts," he explained.

Peace talks

"If insurgency is reduced to an inconsequential level, there and only then, can we say that the government is ready to sit in," Sayson added.

The CPP celebrated its 41st anniversary on Dec. 26.

The rebel group marked its point of 27,000 fighters in the late 1980s but dwindled following a bloody internal purge in the 1980s that led to the murders of hundreds of cadres suspected of being government spies.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has given security forces until 2010 to defeat the NPA, which, according to military estimates, has only 5,700 fighters at the end of 2007.

The on-and-off peace talks between the government and the rebels have been stalled since 2004 because both parties were adamant in pushing for their respective personal demands in the start of the talks.

On Wednesday, the government and the rebels declared a ceasefire from Dec. 24 to Dec. 26, and from Dec. 31 to Jan. 1. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

MT. SANTA CLAUSE in Kabayan, Benguet

Benguet execs seek help to save Mt. Santa Claus

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

KABAYAN, BENGUET—BUSInessmen who are looking their green caves are threatening to defile nature a portion of a big mountain here that for many years have attracted tourists and campers and visitors for hosting the Santa Claus.

The rock figure, etched on a high cliff of Mt. Dakkongan, has been an eye-catcher long before the Department of Environment and Natural Resources bought the property from the Benguet National High and Elementary schools in Barangay Eddet.

Businessmen are afraid though that the Santa Claus figure might disappear due to environmental degradation.

Mayor Robert Cariño said landfires have lessened the greenery of Mt. Dakkongan and they have opposed the ban of Santa Claus.

"That's why I am calling on all concerned to collaborate to come to our town and try to conquer Mt. Dakkongan and Santa Claus," he said. "Only climbers would have the faith to try to access the condition of Santa Claus at close range."

Cariño said the Santa Claus here is found in a cliff that is too dangerous to climb.

"The only way to reach the rock face is from above the mountain since there is no way from below. And only mountain climbers with complete gadgets can get close to Santa Claus," he said.

Bryan Cambri, provincial tourism officer assistant, said Mt. Dakkongan is prone to landfires.

A barangay of Bakakeb, Cambri recalled a big fire that destroyed major portions of the mountain when he was still an elementary student of DEDAS.

He agreed with Cariño that only skilled climbers could reach Santa Claus.

"Kapagdilig a ito only way to get there," he said.

Councilor Manny Bacsain, the town council's tourism committee vice chair, said serving Mt. Dakkongan is part of the accord he signed in proposed recreational code.

He said they plan a camera competition for Mt. Dakkongan especially since it is where the Longest River is found. "The mountain is a major watershed for the town," he added.

Fermin said viewing Santa Claus need to be part of its annual "Christmas Eid Kapan gan" eco-tourism adventure offering during the Yuletide season.

The adventure featured a three-day hike to the town's unexplored caves and rivers and visits to authorities and establishments in the.

At overnight camp at the Ub DAD grounds facing Mt. Santa Claus capped the trek which was highlighted by community dancing participated by local hope folk.

But the adventure was curtailed this year due to the roads that were damaged by Typhoon "Pepeng" in October. Dave Prudencio, provincial tourism officer, said DOT. Santa Claus has been included in the promotional packages for tourists proposed by the regional tourism office.

Tourists now flocking to Tibiao fish spa in Antique

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

THE QUIET TOWN OF TIBIAO IN Antique has not been the same since a fish spa opened in June.

The normally sleepy and largely tourist town has flocked to the town proper. 72 kilometers north of the capital town of San Jose, to experience the much talked about spa which features small fishes that nibble on dead skin, calluses and cuticles, creating a tingling sensation.

Rex Daniels, co-founder of the Tibiao Fish Spa, said more than 2,000 guests had visited the spa as of October, barely four months since it opened in June.

"Most of the locals are foreign and neighboring provinces, many visitors including foreigners, came all the way from Manila.

Many of them were attracted by news reports, both local and international including on television's foot-pare pare in Angeles, Daniels said in an e-mail.

"It was fascinating to know they came all the way to Tibiao just to check out the fish spa they read about," he said.

The spa, one of a few of its kind

A VISITOR tries out the Tibiao fish spa, where small fishes nibble on the feet's calluses, dead skin and cuticles.

in the country, utilizes an indigenous fish species in Tibiao, called the 'pugawod' seen in fish spas in Manila and Boracay Island.

P28 minimum charge

The Tibiao health council is also popular because it charges a minimum of only P28 for 10 minutes and P2 for every succeeding minute. Students are charged a discounted rate of P5, per minute.

The spa was founded by Hazel Calaunag, a marine biologist-graduate from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) in Miag-ao, Iloilo, who discovered last year that a kind of fish from a friend's community pool created a soothing sensation while nibbling on dead skin.

The project was supported by Daniels and Victor Marie Emmanuel Servais, Calaunag's close friends and fellow classmates.

Both aquaculture fisheries majors, Pereria and Daniels helped in the technical setup and operations, including designing the illustration and aesthetic systems.

Tour packages

Daniels said the group had started organizing tour packages for those who want to experience the spa and other attractions in Tibiao, including fishing, birds and pottery making, and wakeboarding the popular Bagong Baro falls.

Located at Calaunag's house along the national highway in the town proper, the spa has also generated local employment. Calaunag is organizing motorcycle and tricycle drivers as private transport for their tours.

The spa operators have also asked fishcrafts as well as brick and pottery makers, to provide them with extra income from the resort visitors.

Students of the UPV's College of Management Marketing Society have also helped in the spa's business planning and marketing.

'Nonprofit'

Because of the cheap rates, the students described the spa more as a "nonprofit organization" rather than a business, Daniels said.

"We realize it's quite true as we are eligible, with some hesitation, slightly increase our rates next year to keep our endeavors sustainable. Of course, we will still make sure we are the 'fish spa for the masses,'" he said.

Daniels have continuously approached Calaunag for a possible expansion in Iloilo, Boracay, Cebu and Manila.

Calaunag said in an earlier interview that he would maintain the spa in Tibiao until its fish species and technology are patented, that Daniels said expansion could come soon because of the spa's fast growing popularity.

"Our first priority now is to expand to Iloilo and eventually to other parts of the region. With this, we will be able to share the affordable fish spa experience with them," Daniels said.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ NAGA CITY

3 die in fire

THREE siblings died on Christmas Day when their house caught fire while they were asleep in Barangay Barangay Concepcion Mission, Camarines Sur, a report from the local police said Saturday.

The victims were Marie Christine Herrera, 5, and her sisters Clarise, 7 months, and Kaila, 3, the brother Vince Dominic, 8, survived.

Senior Police Officer 1 Rolando Balahadia of Milaor town police said the incident occurred at about 9 p.m. on Christmas, while the parents of the victims were at their neighbor's house watching television.

The casualty said the door of the victims' house caught fire from a kerosene lamp left by their parents. Fire then crept on the blanket used by the children.

Because it was made of light materials, the house was razed with the victims before help came.

Senior Fire Officer 3 Aaniel Gedaya of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Milaor town said they had no firetruck.

Jesus Calixto Delos Reyes
Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ COTABATO CITY

Bomb blast in Cotabato

AN IMPROVISED explosive device went off in a public market in Cotabato city on Friday morning but no one was hurt.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Ponce, 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said unidentified men had planted the IED under an Isuzu truck, which was parked in front of a store in "Makro" in Barangay Poblacion.

The 8:30 p.m. blast damaged the truck, he said.

Ponce said the explosion was likely the handiwork of the Al-Khobar bombing gang.

Edwin O. Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

Mishap kills soldier

A SOLDIER died while two others were injured when their vehicle fell into a ravine in Barangay Bagacay in Carmen, North Cotabato, while heading to the 6th Infantry Division headquarters in Awang, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao, when the truck they were in overturned at about 8 a.m. in Barangay Crossing Simuay, Sultan Kudarat town.

Killed was Cpl. Danilo Gremar. Wounded were identified only as Cpl. Richard and Cpl. Balinsaing.

Soldiers who were coming atop the vehicle were thrown out and the vehicle landed on top of him, witnesses said.

Edwin Fernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

■ CAGAYAN CITY

Quarrel leads to death

A CITY government employee was shot dead allegedly by a fellow town councilor after a quarrel during a party at Barangay Villa Luna on Christmas Eve.

Nonito Lavandero Batiangal, a member of the city public information office, died hours after he was operated on by doctors at the Cagayan District Hospital after he was allegedly shot by former Councilor Edwin de Luna. Police said De Luna was stabbed in the chest and carried by Batiangal when they quarreled.

Filimon Flores Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

COMMON QUARTERS Children of relocated families share sleeping room at their temporary shelter in Guinobatan, Albay.

TOURIST ATTRACTION Mobile phone, digital camera or whatever, tourists find a photo opportunity in an ash-covering Mayon Volcano in Albay.

'Damayan' spirit alive amid threat of big Mayon eruption

By Jenny Q. Al

"We would buy vegetables from other evacuees. They would bring their harvests here in the evacuation center rather than sell them in the market," she said.

Sharing little they have

Manong is one of more than 39 villages within the 9-kilometer danger zone whose residents had to flee their homes to escape the threat from Mayon.

Once it happened that the Ayudabas received six kilograms of rice, four packs of noodles, eight canned goods, and a 25-gram pack of coffee that were supposed to be good for three days.

That was also the same ration that the Abellons and his family of seven children received—an amount that wouldn't last them more than two days.

Such a discrepancy has bred a feeling of generosity among the evacuees.

One big family

In the cramped classrooms of San Roque Elementary School, lack of a comfortable sleeping space was also a problem.

The solution: The evacuees put together, like jigsaw puzzle pieces, whatever mats they had. In the absence of mats, they shared cardboard cartons to shield themselves against the cold floors.

"All evacuees would sleep together like one big family," said Jesus Perez, 41, of Binanuahan Malinao.

Since a classroom houses as many as over 100 people, some would sleep in the hallways, Perez said. Others, including a one-month-old baby, slept on a stage.

Upon waking up, over 1,000 evacuees would form long queues to the only two functional bathrooms in the evacuation center.

"Some of us would wake as early as 1 a.m. to avoid the long queues. Others found it more convenient to go back to their homes in the danger zones to clean themselves up," Perez told the Inquirer.

Culture of generosity

Jolly Lagtalbo, a sociology professor from Bicol University in Daraga, Albay, said, "It is true that crisis creates a political climate for giving. But in the evacuation centers, it may be more than that."

She said the rules of generosity from crowded evacuation centers were real and deeply rooted in the Filipino way of life.

"Generosity is a Christian deed. Filipinos are innately generous people," Lagtalbo said. "Talimusan like this would simply not generosity, a value that has always been there, though, at times, it just has to be revived."

She added: "The disaster culture becomes a source of strength for the refugees. It helps them cope and stand strong."

Uniquely Filipino

Lagtalbo said Filipinos used expressions unique terms to describe similar rural values of sharing—"pakikisama, diwa yan, and bayanihan."

"These are unique Filipino values deeply embedded in the Filipino's familial culture."

She said the disrupted culture presented in rural communities into something solemn Filipinos could learn from.

"Urban Filipinos value their space and privacy so much more than the rural folk," Lagtalbo said. "That is why the refugees could adapt in crowded evacuation centers and could easily share what they have with one another."

The sense of being faced with the same danger—that posed by an angry mountain—may have reinforced that communal feeling.

Buildup of magma

Volcanologists yesterday said that while Sunday earthquakes had been recorded from the volcano in recent days, magma continued to build up inside and any lull in activity could be followed by a bigger eruption.

A hazardous eruption remains possible within days, and residents who live near the volcano's slopes should not be misled into hearing the evacuation centers and returning back to their homes, warned volcanologist Edgardo Laguerta.

"The number of volcanic earthquakes has gone down, but this is just part of the eruptive cycle of Mayon," he said.

1984 lesson

The number of quakes decreased from 871 recorded during the 24-hour period ending Friday morning to 406 recorded during the next 24 hours, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

Laguerta said instruments showed the volcano remained inflated despite having spilled more than 28 million cubic meters of lava over the last two weeks. That means the lava being released is being replaced by magma coming from beneath the volcano.

"We are looking not only at what Mayon is presently exhibiting because that fluctuates. We are also looking at its past characteristics," he said, recalling that in 1984, a four-day lull was followed by a sudden, big eruption.

He added: "What is becoming clear is that (the volcano) is getting charged. That is when the lava is rising but cannot get out."

"But because the volcano looks calm ... it does not mean its activity is decreasing. We cannot be off our guard. After this calm period, it could explode with even more force," Laguerta said.

Hissing, rumbling

Showing no letup in its "high level of activity," Mayon hissed and rumbled, casting ash columns a kilometer high from its summit, Phivolcs said.

It said the rumblings continued to be heard at the Lignon Hill Observatory in Legazpi. A total of 466 earthquakes also shook the mountain and emissions of sulfur dioxide remained high at 8,993 tons per day.

Alert level 4, meaning a hazardous eruption is possible within days, remains enforced and no one is allowed to venture within the 8-km danger zone from the summit, it said.

"Areas just outside of this (danger zone) should prepare for evacuation in the event hazardous explosive eruptions intensify," Phivolcs said.

Cash rewards

Gov. Joey Salceda is offering P100,000 in cash to any barangay affected by the continuing eruptions that doesn't suffer any casualties.

"If we achieve the zero casualty target, then it would entice evacuees to come in because it is proven that we can move out in the mid of calamities, per Albay is still worth investing," Salceda said.

The 2,460-meter has erupted 49 times in recorded history, to 1014, more than 1,200 people were killed as lava buried the town of Cagsawa. *With reports from Alexis Pupo, AFP and AFP*

BRIGHTLY lit houses never fail to amaze people who visit the Pelicano neighborhood.

PHOTOS BY NONOY TIRILAN

After 'Ondoy,' street glitters with lights, hope

By Jenny Q. Al

ssorted ceiling lights that consume less power. The trying times, she stresses, should not be a reason to suspend the celebration of Christmas.

"It is not right that we only ask for blessings from the Lord. We should also express our gratitude by celebrating His birth," Lim says.

The 63-year-old businesswoman is familiar with life's difficulties. She came from a poor family that lived in a slum area in Sampaloc, Manila. But she never lost hope. She now owns restaurants and operates a trading company.

Because of her many blessings, she vowed to help make the lives of poor families more bearable. She joined nationwide programs of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Mandaluyong.

In the past 12 years, she has brought joy to thousands of people through her fabulous Christmas decors, even if it means having to pay twice her average monthly electricity bill.

Her family usually consults her about the theme of the display as early as June and as in house artist works with some of Lim's employees to make sure the decors are ready for installation by first November. The display extension until early January for the Feast of the Three Kings.

Lim says: "We should not lose hope. The Lord is our hope. We should show Him that we are preparing for His day. We should show Him that we are grateful."

HOPEFUL Lim: Trying times should not be a reason to suspend the celebration of Christmas.

Like falling stars

This year, Lim's house is festooned with lights of different colors twinkling to move, stay—like falling stars. The centerpiece is a giant bulb, a reminiscence of the Nativity scene.

Neighbors and families from different provinces visit the scenic which came under knee-deep floods when Ondoy battered the metropolis on September—the first time it happened on Ordonez Street. Nearby low-lying communities were under waist-deep flood.

Children from surrounding poor communities also come in droves, singing Christmas carols in passersby.

The crowd is bigger during weekends, so much so, the neighborhood association has hired three security guards to watch over the short street, where three other houses also boast such eye-catching decors.

Like a giant golden box

For instance, the huge house of the Dalisay family appears like a giant, golden box.

Lights follow the transom outline of the house—from the gate all the way to the water meter. A twinkling star adorns its top, like the Star of Bethlehem.

It is a family tradition that has survived for almost 33 years, Ernest Dalisay says. The decoration does not follow any particular theme, but every year, the family likes to add more lights.

Dalisay explains: "This is how we celebrate Christmas. We love having lots of visitors. We entertain them and we let them enjoy the lights."

It takes more than a month to install all of the light strands that follow the shape of the two-story ancestral home. But even the garage is spared.

Filipinos love Christmas

The entire compound—including a garden beside the house—sparkles with yellow, red and green lights.

It does not matter if the family is shelling out more than P60,000 in power bills this December, more than twice the family's monthly average consumption.

"We Filipinos are fun-loving. Despite the calamities we have experienced, we can still cope. We still celebrate Christmas," Dalisay says.

Energex, Smart turn back NBTC foes

JOHN MARMAT AND GERALD DAVID LEI CNERGEX-PAMPANGA PAINT Pamfilo in Pampanga, 91-80. for his second straight triumph in the Metro National Basketball Training Center D-League recently at the University of the Assumption gymnasium. Smart Pampanga, meanwhile, recovered from its opening-day setback with a 74-66 victory over B-MEG Pampanga.

Sunday SPORTS

E-mail to: _sports@inquirer.net.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/sports

Editor: Teddyboy S. Melendres

Christmas joy from a secret win-win team

BY THE WILL SEASON OF SHARING, the Filipinos to lob with more than his share of what's being forgotten.

BARE EYE

Micah Trinidad

But unholy sacrifices, you see, are quite easy to commit.

We by back-to-back devastating loss from the killer women, the Perpetual Help lady had dent to re-assess lineup for again ended from the gracious Magnolia classic Monsters.

an international drama.

In Inter Miami Pamplon, in morning a stomach world rocking cousin, an relative mouse somebody for the for more to ease, gave an a second chance of pride and for All-Asian his neighbor conquest of Puerto Ri. me Miguel into to close I a

* * *

"It is difficult to celebrate after a year so disappointed by my squadron," noted a holiday host yesterday. "How does one have a 'Merry Christmas' when the heart is still sore?"

Of course, there was nothing to be truly sore about SEP's slightly improved performance in the 2009 Southeast Asian Games in quietly progressive Laos.

It was just not bad that, after SEP served a notch up from winning ninth overall, the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission promptly announced dramatic different prep time.

There remained a distinct division between the two major SEP sport's bodies.

* * *

But silly secrets.

As could only be, the SEP contingent, which left for Laos to squeeze chestnut flights but which finally competed in two, readily qualified for the focus of the two (rocks).

Then there were the 20 moving SEP medalists in the Laos Games which dispersed unavailable athletes after our medals were delivered by a stripping flame on the eve of each Independence day journey for home.

* * *

Not that we needed to immediately have a third sausagia set of sites on a performance.

But last month, Nino Tarayao, quiet marksman from Mandaluyong City, swept out of kilometer to deliver 50 pieces of metal football Santa to the major Peoples in Lipa City, Batangas.

He had wanted to send a hundred pieces, but received his name and the number missed in relative or manners.

Manny Pete, a native of San Fernando, La Union, who made his first edition in Baguio City, then joins a group of swindlers sure to an annual gift-giving program for poor barrio children in quiet, west Tondo Penguin.

* * *

It's just a small bag each kid will receive with, containing canned goods, rice, snack crackers, noodles, candies, a drink can, sweater with cute and clothes sent to the like. Dear Lord, a spot coffee, all the way from Los Angeles, California.

The alibi, summed by three-time Olympian Warren Kiamco, who was reserved in his south Mandaluyong mainly a year ago today, has been going on for mostly unbroken.

Manny Chavez of Mandaluyong City, in in the past, four other members of this secret group is sending his valuable over the first.

The old list is known, aside from Pe Yee, Ramon Bautista, Jaro Mapua, Jr. Raul Bagaoisan of Mandaluyong, Rey Mendoza, Cesar Montaño of Lipa City, Randy Saulon and Rhing Ramos Bacnotan.

As in the past, the broken from the Mendoza Dead mayor for Rizal Memorial Coliseum exhibit members in memorial circuits, organizers the other estate commemorating the contributions and efforts of these incredible heroes from non-Christmas game.

Golden jins next target: Asian Games stint

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES' IMMMMMMM gold medal winners are determined to bring their winning act to the Asian Games next year.

Tibaredas Jr. and Alex Bilocura said they are prepared to meet the delegated standards required to join the Nicanor elite pool which the Philippine Sports Commission is planning to field in the Guangzhou for ad in November.

Go, the two-time Olympian and back-to-back SEA Games champ, said he still has what it takes to compete in the Asian Games at 28 years old.

"I got lucky again," said Go, the lone gold winner for taekwondo in Thailand two years ago, who opened with this year's four-gold stint.

"I was in very good condition in Laos," said the featherweight titlist Go. "Maybe it's because my trainer and wife was watching me closer. I was training for which you and I feel happy my hard work bore fruit."

The 25-year-old Bolinao, champion in the heavyweight class, felt that he can still improve in the next few years.

"During the fight in Laos, I was not physically ready because my right ankle was in pain," listed Bolinao, a University of Santo Tomas graduate like Go.

"My grandpa use to tick him, but with pinpoint accuracy because the more I felt the more painful it gets," said Bolinao. "I told myself that this is my fourth SEA Games and I need to get the gold. For the first time). But I was not only thinking of myself but to give pride to my country."

Mary Antoinette Rivero and the pocomino team of Cielo Lagman, Rian Ann Ortega and Francesca Sandia accounted for the other PP golds.

The Philippines also registered four silvers and four bronzes to finish third overall behind winner Thailand which posted a 6-3-4 medal tally. Vietnam was second with 5-4-3.

CLEVELAND STAR LeBron James stars for a basket.

Christmas Day riot

Fans revolt as Cavaliers rout Lakers; Celtics thwart Magic

LOS ANGELES—THE CLEVELAND CAVALIERS crushed the Los Angeles Lakers 102-87 in Friday's Christmas Day showdown between two of the NBA's top teams.

Mo Williams scored 20 points and LeBron James 16 for the Cavaliers while Kobe Bryant managed 23 for the Western Conference leading Lakers, who had won each of their past 11 games at home.

"It wasn't about sending a message to them," Cavaliers reporters.

"I was sending a message to ourselves and seeing how we match up with the best team in the NBA at this point."

Williams finished with seven assists, six rebounds and was three-of-three from three-point range while Anderson had nine assists.

Ronnie Artest's Mom also added 13 points on six of seven shooting and center Shaquille O'Neal had 11 points and seven rebounds for the Cavaliers, who lead the Central Division.

Cleveland built a 19-point second-quarter advantage and remained in control throughout, shooting a lot 54.1 percent from the floor and holding the Lakers to 38.8.

"They came out and we matched us, it's a good wake-up call for us," said Bryant, who just missed a triple double with nine rebounds and eight assists despite shooting 11 of 22.

Ron Artest (13) and Jim Good (12) were The only other Lakers to reach double figures in the team's disgruntled fans reacted their frustration by throwing debris on the court.

"I have never seen a Los Angeles crowd act like this before," said Lakers coach Phil Jackson. "I'll bleed their enthusiasm, but I didn't like their demonstrative act. It was not a well played game and it was not a well played game and so as a response the crowd was unhappy about it."

The second-to-its Christmas night visit from minutes left when an ejection and another technical in the Lakers' bench prompted many fans to throw their programs projectiles onto the court.

After another foul measures later, several more items hands were thrown along with a full water bottle.

In Orlando, Florida, the Boston Celtics battled Orlando with exceptional defense to hammer out an 86-77 victory in a meeting of the Eastern Conference leaders.

Rajon Rondo had 17 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists, and Rey Allen added 16 points for the Celtics, who rolled to their 14th win in their last 15 games.

Reuters, AP

STARS SHINE IN DARK Dante L. Jimon (K-C) Parker (Jimon, 37-30; Pinoy: 4 LE Quinn, 13-61; Allen 4 Ilan Turk 16-0).

YEARENDER

Pacquiao, Amit shine as RP five fumbles in Tianjin

(Second of three parts)

By Cedrik F. Tapao

THOSE WHO FROLIC AT THE CLUB THAT MANNY Pacquiao is one of the world's greatest boxers should simply look back at the year that is soon to pass.

Like he did so many times in the past few years, Pacquiao was Philippine sport's shining grace and a unifying figure for the country.

The first of his two conquests this year came in May when he destroyed two-time world champion Ricky Hatton in two quick rounds to capture the Englishman's International Boxing Organization (IBO) junior welterweight title at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada before a record of 16,000.

Fast, brave and relentless, Pacquiao knocked out Hatton with his trademark left hook that landed flush on the Englishman's chin and sent him sprawling on the canvas.

The astounding victory hacked scenario rebellion Inception's speed and explosiveness could prove unstoppable to overcome the tall and lanky Hatton, who was also known for his knockout power.

"This was no surprise," Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach said of the knockout victory.

"I hope you enjoyed the show," said Pacquiao, who landed 108 of 335 power punches in the short fight.

"I believe it's a hard punch and when it landed I thought he would get up." Pacquiao said of the power's first landed the fight.

Pacific pool shark

The euphoria over the Pacquiao victory barely subsided when Bobbie Amit showed that the Philippines' dominance in sports was no longer limited to the men's game.

The 27-year-old from Mandaue City, Cebu became the country's first (women's world champion in the sport in July when she stunned two-time world champion Liu Shin-yun of Chinese Taipei, 10-4, in the Red Bull World Pioneer's 9-Ball Championship at the Gil North in Quezon City.

There was despair, however, in the sport closer to the heart of Filipinos.

The Jimmy Mann Filipino quintet, made up of Pilipinas superstars, failed to shine at the World Championship in 2009 after finishing eighth in the Asia qualifying tournament in Tianjin, China in August.

The Filipinos had breezed past inferior opponents in the Asian tournament in Medan, Indonesia, in July but got their reality check when they lost six of their eight matches to the powerful Asian Cagers Squad.

Heading into the Pilipinas tournament, the team was brimming with optimism after the Filipino cagers landed in a relatively weak Group B with Korea, Japan and Sri Lanka.

The Filipinos survived the elimination round and reached the quarterfinals, where they count in at the heavy underdog in their showdown with Jordan, the team that handed them a lopsided defeat in the Asian Cup.

Despite a gallant effort till short, the Filipinos dropped an 81-70 decision to Jordan, which qualified several late strikes to shut the door on the country's World Championship bid.

"We still felt look at it (the loss) in a positive way, because we feel that we are still improving," said coach Tong Uson.

But a devastating 90-82 loss to South Korea sent the Philippines reeling down even to 2007 finish in Palembang, Japan.

One of the executives of the 88 squad, Jayson Agustin, however, later grabbed the limelight for his decision to spurn the PBA in favor of the Smart Gilas Pilipinas developmental squad, a team helmed by the Annabong Basketball ng Pilipinas to bring the country back to Olympic basketball action in 2012 in London.

'For the country'

Selected first by Burger King in the PBA Draft in August, the 6-foot-9 former Ateneo Kentucky mainstay changed his mind after the Pilipinas tournament, insisting his "desire to play for the country always seem to rear and my family from anything else."

Agustin was eventually portrayed as an aspiration over four drafts with Newspaper said and played one game for the PBA club, before he was traded to Talk 'N Text, crossed by MBP president Manny V. Pangilinan, in exchange for future draft picks. TNT, as expected, lent Agustin to Smart Gilas to put the latter to rest.

The country's sentiment golfers were also source of pride during the middle of 2009 with Jeard Alaska fighting both Ouch eight and also delivered the 25th golf championship of the US Girls Golf European Championship by ruling the boys' seven-and-under event in Klitpinkie, Scotland.

HAPPY Pacquiao (standing) hoisted off by 2009 with a sensational knockout of British star Ricky Hatton. He topped it with a 12th-round TKO of Miguel Cotto to become the first boxer to win world titles in seven different weight classes.

Debbie Acelon topped the PWBA (Pacific Northwest Golf Association) Women's Amateur Championship crown at the Aerodrome Golf Club in Olds for her third triumph in the year including the PCNT Hometown Inc. Open and RP national amateur title.

Other victories

The first Asian Medal Arts Games saw the country winning two gold courtesy of taekwondo jin Jeffrey Figueroa and wushu artist Mary Jane Erdiaw, while the Filipino boy in the Asian Dirt Games accounted for 216 golds to finish fifth overall.

In a fitting follow-up to his knockout win in Manila in April, Nonito Donaire scored a 12-round unanimous decision over former Concepcion to claim the interim World Boxing Association super flyweight corset in August at the Reid Park Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Another Filipino boxer, Rolan Ilhoto also kept his 100 fight Strongbox crown by outpointing Jessa Erbo of Mexico in Honolulu, Hawaii.

(To be continued)

AMIT

Your family's safety is in your hands.

Waterborne diseases are a serious threat in our country right now, especially during this past season of typhoons and floods. These diseases are caused by pathogenic microorganisms which are directly transmitted when contaminated drinking water is consumed.

Some of the primary forms of waterborne diseases are bacterial infections like diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, and typhoid. Other forms of disease that can be transmitted through water are protozoal infections like amoebiasis, parasitic infections like hyatidosis, and viral infections like Hepatitis A.

The best way to avoid waterborne diseases is to be extra careful about the quality of your drinking water. Safe water intake is crucial to being healthy. When the quality of drinking water is compromised, waterborne diseases come into view. Dr. Florentino, Senior Scientific Advisor of the International Life Sciences Institute of Southeast Asia, Chairman-President of the Nutrition Foundation of the Philippines and Consultant of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of DOST recommends: "To avoid all these infections, it is imperative that we are always conscious about the safety of the water we drink. It is important to remember that not all processes of purifying water may remove all the harmful elements in drinking water. Distilled drinking water ensures clean water for you and your family."

The Edge of Distilled over Tap

Today in the Philippines, families are fortunate that getting pure and safe drinking water is easy, thanks to Wilkins Distilled Drinking Water. Dr. Florentino points out "Distilled water is water in its purest form: free from harmful pollutants such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites among others. The process of distillation frees water from these pollutants and other contaminants such as chemicals, toxins, heavy metals, and other particular matter. Basically, distillation consists of simply boiling the water thus evaporating it into steam, and then condensing the steam back to water, leaving behind all the impurities originally present, resulting in a pure, pH balanced water."

People who rely on refreshing themselves via the kitchen faucet should think twice of the safety of what they drink. Tap water originates from lakes, rivers, streams, and underground sources. The greater part of water goes through a system of cleaning at the local water treatment plant. Then again, because of lack of funds to afford the essential technology, many harmful pollutants and waterborne diseases may be present in the finished treated water.

Why choose Wilkins?

The reality is that there will always be things in life that is beyond one's control. Yet if there is one thing that one can have the power to do, in the name of family health, that will be choosing the right water to drink.

Wilkins is manufactured under a strict Food Safety Management System certified as complying with HACCP, GMP, Codex Alimentarius and ISO22000:2005[1]. It comes from protected water source, and uses state-of-the-art purification & distillation process, following approved standards from Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) and Asia Bottled Water Association (ABWA). It employs a fully-automated and sanitary filling & capping process, and thus, untouched by human hands.

That's why you should choose Wilkins, the distilled drinking water that has no impurities[2] that can harm your family. It has been the main reason as to why it is the number 1 drinking water brand trusted by mothers. Add to that, Wilkins has forged a partnership with the Philippine Pediatric Society (PPS) for the past five years, combining efforts to fight against waterborne diseases by ensuring safe drinking water for the whole family.

So always give your family only Wilkins. Wilkins is available in various sizes: 330ml, 500ml, 1 Liter, 1.5 Liter, 2 Liter, 4000 ml and 6000 ml bottles to suit your family's needs and to keep them hydrated at any time. It is available in all major supermarkets and drugstores nationwide, and Wilkins 5 Gallons may also be delivered to homes in key cities across the country.

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Aplus METRO
Gino Abalos S. Ulanday

A look at Antipolo Christmases past

A woman recalls the things that holidays are made of

By Tess P. Mapa
Contributor

TIME FLIES! WHO KNEW THAT I would end up in the pilgrim town of Antipolo east of the Metro back in 1976 as a young married woman pregnant with her first child?

There we stood outside a newly constructed apartment in a new village—my husband Tito and I...full of hope and dreams. We were living on a shoestring budget but positively brimming with youth and idealism! Back then, we were a one-to-come family. Ricki. Against my elder brother's wishes, we insisted we live in the country where the air was fresh and pure.

And so it was that we found this enviable duplex—actually, it faced us—located in the farthest corner of the boondocks. "Embodo" as our folks called it. But guess what? The rent was oh so cheap, the water strong, and its supply bottomless. It had homeowner access, with a shower separate from the toilet, and the bathroom tiles ceramic. Not only that, our bedroom had a view of charming rice terraces from the nearby Cainta-Taytay-Cubao ridelong on grass.

We knew that my first-born would come out into the world for the first in the first of the Dragon! News of his arrival in our tiny village traveled fast. The village elders, my husband's new acquaintances, said we were twice blessed since: 1) A bonafide baby brings good luck and 2) the baby was born with healing powers.

LOLA Tess [center] with granddaughters Gisela and Stacey

The visit

The baby, whom we called Jose—and was not yet a month old, was visited by good old Hazzie—our new neighbor Greg Ashenazi, himself a member in those parts then, who was pining for his 1st Christmas. He dressed a Santa Claus suit and dropped by. But I don't think Jose actually saw Santa Greg in his "ho, ho, ho" getup since he had just spent nine months in his mother's womb and still had difficulty, uh, focusing.

When our city-bred friends came to view the latest addition to the family they couldn't help being disoriented by the strangely quiet street. Except for the moos and clanging of the cicadas, nothing shattered the dark silent night. "Hey, di ko kaya sanayin dito! Sobrang tahimik! (Friend, I can't live here! It's too quiet!)," was a common observation.

When Jesse Bati before Jesse turned 4 we would be blessed with another boy! Actually, we wanted a girl and would have called her Rose, inspired by Mama Mary's Holy Rosary. We still kept the rose colors my mother was our christened Diego Ronnie. We felt we were in the presence of an old soul but he seemed not to be a "resident" here to life.

That was 33 years ago.

Come to think of it, the years deeply roomed by. And just like in the telenovela "Dong Ng Fabal," our family had its share of ups and downs. I remember once selling my brother Tareq, who is your typical macho Pinoy male, if he could hold on to my earrings as I would have something "for a rainy day."

When Jesse was nineteen-ish (apparently when he was 17, I called my brother from a pay phone and whispered, "Tareq, that baby day is here." He said "Bat Time! It's raining every day here!" He was only kidding, of course. But I digress.

'Balikbayan' Christmas

Diego had an infinite fixation for Christmas trees. In the beginning, we were the proud owners of a tiny Christmas tree that we grabbed from the stage of one of the promo events I handled for my former boss, Philip Yap's. (More his benevolent soul) held at the Big Dome.

But Diego insisted on a bigger one when he turned 5. We had a three-foot still tree that Diego insisted through the years could be simply crumbled from those old age. When we finally moved to our own brand-new house located on the other side of the village, my brother Tareq treated us to an eight-foot tall tree lying resplendent in its own box, and which is now an object of desire of our five grandchildren.

At one time or another, our Christmas tree has seen a bottle of bubbly on top into our living room during Yuletide season. Ex-Jesse from Sacramento, sister Fe from San Francisco and Alicia from Hollywood, visitors to her Tinsley from Louisville and Dave from Illinois, Tareq and his wife Shirley from Pasadena, Aunt Nita and her boys Nicolai and Louise from Geneva and our surprise guests, Mildred, and many others. Then there was our extended family who arrived in droves from all over Cainta and the other side of the Pacific Ocean—Puerto Galera. Too many to count.

Today, except for the "Hamada" (Queen at the fork of the road leading to this pilgrim town) upper city cum room, duplexes has grown progressive, with mushrooming malls like Ayllon, Greenwich, McDonalds, Clarinding, National Bookstore, Mercury Drug, Medical City, Red Ribbon, Max's, Shoprite, Chevy Fundarama, etc.

AXA chief: 'Life insurance is not about dying; it's about living!'

In a recent press event, AXA Philippines President & CEO, Dr. Ben Hermoso, made a controversial yet compelling statement about how Filipinos think about life insurance.

"We continued several months, studied among Filipinos to understand their real needs," explained Ben. "What we found out was that majority of Filipinos think that life insurance is only all about death and dying. What Filipinos fail to realize is that with AXA, life insurance is actually for the living and here's a real life story."

Ben narrated on these words, "You see, at AXA, more than 90% of the benefits we pay out are enjoyed while the insured are still living—college education, retirement and pension, hospitalization, savings & investments, and wealth building. This is because our products are not only for death or dying, but are designed to help people live and enjoy life. That is why we are the first life insurance company to consider AXA."

This insight was the key message during the recent launch of AXA's new brand game, with the theme "Here to Life!" held at the Greenbelt 5, Fontana Field, Makati City.

Jose Marion, Chief Marketing Officer of AXA Philippines further explains the brand theme, "Because AXA is redefining insurance and the way Filipinos should feel and think about insurance, we can see Filipinos to live a full life because our life insurance is designed to enhance that living."

Jose points out other growth of how AXA plans to redefine the life insurance industry. "We have started using less dramatic images in our consumer materials as well as tweak the price in our communications as part of our objective to redefine insurance as it is meant and easier to understand. We also just developed a new Financial Needs Analysis tool called 'AXA Life Issues' which assesses their personal circumstance with the products that match their financial needs and capabilities. This way we keep the simplicity of the financial solutions and advice we provide."

"We at AXA will always be available, reliable, and attentive to our customers by redefining the way we do things and improving for the future. This is the new essence of the AXA brand" said Hermoso.

AXA Philippines is a joint venture between the global AXA Group, one of the world's biggest life insurers, and the Metrobank Group.

A look at Antipolo Christmases past

From page A11

There, too, are the homeparoul-spoiled kind from the adjacency nursery-type pavement stalls like Sonia Flowers, Vivas Chalet/St. Martin Spa, Exile Resthaus, Chabing's Steakhouse, Pilar's Fabric Store, Coffee Spa, The Centennial Mens Café, Pasta Gallery, Pendant Stores and Chicken's Hobby Emporium. Because of traffic we have overseen this city, you can just imagine the noise and carbon level at high season.

'Feral' parade

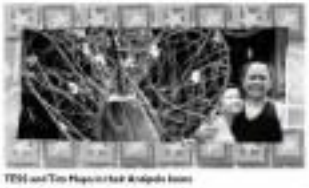
Now that Tito and I are empty-nesters—Jose, all of 31, and Diego, 29, he-ring since Rowena the coup seeing whichever the maids and big sibs took happen to be within steering distance—life is anything but out of sweet retirement. When our grandchildren climb the hills of Antipolo every weekend, we're on our heels and knee. At night, it's a wonderful thrill to watch the twinkling, blinking, dizzying parade of parol (Christmas lanterns) lining the highway.

"Look! Ito oh!" 5-year-old Stacey would exclaim at the sight of a contemporary of a goat. Or shapes topped by giant green and yellow mangoes, yellow lemon and bright-red Christmas stocks hanging over our heads. We don't remember to gabble at our children's games.

The legendary artist Amorsolo, who used to live in a neighboring town when the world was young and life was oh, so slow-ly, would have cursed and said, "Ito Am-ripit-soo-qui-e!" Then, in his own sweet time, he would have commented to Amihir for "pride of place" on canvas.

Mahigpit ng Parol.

A PHYSICAL break gathering at the Plaza Clemente in Antipolo City to celebrate the holidays. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



TESS and Tito Magsaysay look at Antipolo lights

AN ILLUSTRATION by Jose Magsaysay's family matching the Cubao expo' race but no cloth.

Thieves break into Camp Crame on Christmas Day

By Marlon Ramos

THIEVES BROKE INTO THE headquarters of the Philippine National Police on Christmas Day, making off with radio and video equipment from the press office.

The break-in at the PNP Press Corps' office in Camp Crame, Quezon City, was discovered by a janitor, Bernardino Bandilo, when he reported for work at around 10 a.m. yesterday.

In his statement to the camp base police investigators, Bandilo said that when he opened the media office, he discovered that a 21-inch TV set and several computer system were missing.

"All that was left were the cords where connecting the TV and the computer systems," he added.

Radio reporter Noel Alfonso, PNP Press Corps president, called the break-in a "shame," noting that the media center was located on the ground floor of the PNP's Public Information Office building.

It was also next to the base police, the camp's main security headquarters.

Alfonso called for a thorough investigation of the robbery, saying it may have been an "inside job" carried out by two or more individuals.

The Internet tried to get the reaction of Chief Supt. Leonardo Espina, PNP spokesperson, but he did not reply to phone calls and text messages.

The burglary took place while PNP Director General Jesus Versoza was celebrating his 55th birthday at the Villa Mamo, a Thai-official residence of the PNP chief in Camp Crame.

The incident was not the first time that burglars broke into the press office.

Last year, the hard disks of several computers were stolen.

Last week, a young boy was also apprehended for allegedly trying to pry open the windows of a car owned by a staff member of the PNP Police Community Relations Group.

The camp until he the scene early last year of the fatal shooting of the murder case filed against Dole Boxer Mayor Andrei Ampatuan Jr., the alleged brains behind the massacre of 57 people in Maguindanao on Nov. 23.

Policeman who shot superior at Senate gives himself up

By Nina Calleja

A POLICEMAN ACCUSED OF shooting his superior at the Senate compound in Pasay City on Christmas Day surrendered to authorities yesterday, the police said.

On Friday morning, PO1 Rolando Mendoza, facing chief Supt. Edilso Abanero were in the head during an argument over two missing M-16 rifles.

Both men are with the Police Security and Protection Group (PSG), were assigned to guard the Senate office.

Pasay police chief, Senior Supt. Rizal Marcelo, said Mendoza, who gave himself up to PNP officials at around noon yesterday, he also surrendered his service firearm.

"He said he was willing to submit himself to a full-blown investigation," Bernardo said.

Investigator PO3 Marianito Agustin said Bayo-Bayo had yet to submit their his wife, who died the victim.

Bernardo said the police would file a charge of frustrated homicide against Mendoza, who is now being held at the city police headquarters.

He added that the victim underwent surgery at the Manila Adventist Hospital where he was rushed right after the shooting incident although they have yet to get an update on his condition.

Earlier, the victim was reported to be in critical condition.

Initial police investigation showed that Abanero and Mendoza had argued over two missing rifles during an inventory in front of the PSPG office.

Killed, Abanero hit Mendoza in the face, prompting the latter to draw his firearm and shoot the victim.

Fortunately, unscientific, said they would also look into the motive. Earlier, he said Mendoza had accused his superior of taking the missing firearms.

He added that they would ask a judge to issue a warrant which would allow them to search the victim's car after the latter's family refused to let the police check the vehicle he drove in.

METROBRIEFS

Fake branded swiss wear seized

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation raided almost P1 million worth of fake Spanish swiss wear during simultaneous raids in separate establishments in Pasay City and Quezon City.

The raids were led by the verification of complaints filed by Swiss Textiles Inc. and Swiss Textiles Philippines Inc. at the Department of Justice.

The complainants alleged that the establishments were selling counterfeit products bearing the trademarks of the complainants.

Among those raided were Swiss Textiles Inc. at the Ground Floor, Unit 1, Building, Cuenca Avenue and at Unit 208 F. Bonifacio Street, both in Pasay City. The alleged owners of the establishments were identified as Mary Jane Uni, Jasmine Tan, Mary Rose Sevilla and Ma. Gining Dio. According to representatives of the complainants, Atty. Rolando Ignacio Jr., of the law firm Intellectual Property Rights Solutions (IPRS), the raids were conducted by NBI agents led by Special Investigator Manolito Reyes.

The operations resulted in the seizure of 6,193 pieces of various swiss wear bearing the Tissotin trademark. The owners of the establishments were also charged with violating Republic Act 8293, otherwise known as Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Tina B. Santos

Boy drowns in river

A 17-YEAR-OLD boy fell into the Sta. Rosa River near Barangay Don Jose and drowned. The Marikina City Rescue office identified the victim as Joshua Mendoza, a resident of 93 St. Francisco St. in Barangka, Ilaya Brgy. Residents of Barangay Malanday near the river at around 11 a.m. on Dec. 25, according to a search and rescue operation team. The search and rescue operations ended at around 1 p.m. on Dec. 25, according to a search and rescue operation team. The search and rescue operations ended at around 1 p.m. on Dec. 25, according to a search and rescue operation team. The search and rescue operations ended at around 1 p.m. on Dec. 25, according to a search and rescue operation team.

Barangay Malanday near the river at 11 a

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor Gerry Lirio

CAN'T BE THAT COLD in Madrid this Christmas for Philippine-born and educated Regina Fontao Sáez, especially that she's with her Spanish husband Ricardo and children Paula and Mario.

"BECAUSE OF THEIR remittances, the OFWs help keep our economy afloat, especially this Christmas. Happy New Year!" LEWIS LUCARDA, December 2009

...rld to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

'What's nice in Spain is when one conquers the cultural barrier'

GINA AT HOME: "No more lonely nights."

'Feliz Navidad' from a Filipino Madrileña

By Mary Ann Ryce

LIFE IS GOOD Gina with friends and fellow workers in downtown London.

FOR THE PAST 25 years, Regina "Gina" Fontao-Sáez has been celebrating Navidad (Christmas) without the usual profusion Misses or Simbang Gabi.

"Unlike in the Philippines, we do not have here the Simbang Gabi. Only the midnight Mass on Dec. 24 and on Christmas Day itself," said Gina, a native of Dasmariñas, Cavite, who immigrated to Madrid, Spain, in 1980.

Aside from family gatherings, Christmas festivities in Spain is surrounded by lights, ornaments, lanterns, Christmas trees and the Belén (the Nativity), the most common Christmas symbol. "This representation of the birth of Jesus can be seen on the streets, homes or shop windows," she added.

The draw of the famous Christmas lottery, the biggest in Spain and played by almost everybody is celebrated on Dec. 22. This lottery has been an annual yuletide tradition in Madrid since 1763.

On New Year's Eve, all eyes are glued on the television to wait for the tolling of the bells.

Bells and grapes

"In most squares in different towns, the townspeople ring bells and grapes," said Gina. "We take 12 grapes—representing the 12 months of the year—and their taste is be-seen during the last 12 seconds of the year, one grape for each bell."

Spanish custom dictates that those who can eat all the grapes will have 12 months of prosperity during the coming year.

And like most predominantly Catholic countries, the holiday season is capped by gift-giving, but then also led to her meeting her Spanish husband two years later.

"Christmas normally used their letters to the Three Kings a few days before," she said. On the eve of the celebration, a Cabalgata de Reyes (parade) wherein the Kings are present is celebrated in all towns or cities. "It's a the night of magic and illusion," she said.

Before going to bed, the children leave their shoes in a visible spot of the house either under the Christmas tree, in the living room or balcony, and go to bed dreaming that their requested gifts are left by Melchor, Gaspar and Baltasar. And for kids who have been naughty the whole year, they will get to unwind the curtain (a real candy)."

Language barrier

Gina's journey to Spain started a year after finishing Mass Communication in Centro Escolar University because she "wanted to work abroad and see the world." A family friend based in Madrid paved the way for her immediate immigration

to Spain. It's on Jan. 6, the day of the Magi (Three Kings or Wise Men), which is dedicated to children, Gina said.

"Children normally send their letters to the Three Kings a few days before," she said. On the eve of the celebration, a Cabalgata de Reyes (parade) wherein the Kings are present is celebrated in all towns or cities. "It's a the night of magic and illusion," she said.

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Language barrier

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"The first three years, Gina recalled to us e-mail interview, "the process of adaptation was quite hard because of the language barrier. I also remember the first time I spoke on the phone, I was crying...crying not because of pain but for being alone. I was calling my mom, asking the pampering."

Such longing is prevalent among Filipino immigrants and overseas Filipino workers who leave their relatives in another country.

Emotional need

"If you do not have relatives, you (must have) friendships, as years pass by, get to be your relatives. That's what I'm longing for the Philippines," she said.

"The human touch is greatly missed and needed when one lives far away from home."

But those lonely years are over. She is now happily married to Gerardo Sáez, a Spaniard from the famous walled city of Avila, who was introduced to her by a common friend in 1985.

A romantic relationship did not blossom right away between them after their first meeting. "I was not interested because I had my longtime boyfriend in the Philippines (at that time)," Gina said.

After six years of no communication, they both coincidentally crossed again. Somehow, Gina and Gerardo got a different view of each and soon after got married. They are blessed with two children—Paula, 17, and Mario, 11.

From first sight, his make-up sense is divided between work and family. She spends her leisure time with them traveling if not reading, and collecting things she is passionate about—shoes, bags and perfumes.

"I guess it is clear I travel with my children," she said. "I want them to see new places, meet new people and learn."

Although her kids are now grown, Gina still makes sure she has the last look and word in almost everything about them. It's a good thing she has a supportive husband who collaborates in family and household affairs, she said.

Being a working mom, juggling work and family life is a challenge. That's why Gina is grateful for having good colleagues and expat's house in Parques Reunidos, S. A., one of the leaders in the leisure business worldwide, where she works as an executive assistant. She moved to its headquarters in 2007. Her previous jobs had been in the telecommunication industry.

Recalling her job-hunting years in Madrid, Gina said Recovery in English there was an advantage. "By that time, the numbers of Spaniards could speak English fluently; unlike now that many more can speak it," she said.

Cultural gap

Despite living in Madrid for more than half of her life, Gina considers herself still "in limbo" because of the cultural gap.

"I have Spanish citizenship and yet do not feel 100 percent Spaniard. Nor can I say that I am 100 percent Filipina. I am in between," Gina said.

She noted an incident years ago involving a Filipino grandfather arrested by the police for tying his grandson on the steering wheel of their parked car because that his method of discipline was prohibited there, he was imprisoned for child abuse.

In spite of the cultural differences and the car race mentality, Gina said surveys indicate that Spain is one of the best countries to live in.

Being far from home taught her a lot especially in dealing with other people. For her, real friends are always around though there's a gap in time and distance.

"Many people walked into

your life, others left. Some left their footprints and some stay and you go on with the journey. Living by yourself inspires to your character; you learn to survive," she said.

Best gift

Living in a country which never made her feel discriminated also makes a difference.

"It helped that Madrileños are generally open people," she said. "They let you feel welcome and comfortable."

Still, no the clear gaps, there's no place like home for her. Whenever she is with fellow Filipinos, a typical conversation revolves around yearning for the Filipino cuisine, for instance.

In fact, during her last visit to the Philippines in Christmas 2008, she said that she spent most of her time eating.

"Eating food which I missed (there) like cake, Apan, siopao, sisiguing na bangus sa bayabas, chico, etc.," she said.

On that visit, Gina realized that Filipinos are a happy people although the basic needs for the majority are not always being provided.

"Despite being poor and the calamities, they manage to smile and go on with their lives," she said.

"And what I admire most in the Philippines is even how poor the families are, parents see to it that the kids get a new dress or a pair of shoes, or dress their best girls on Christmas Day, and how they go to church and kiss the hands of their godparents or family."

Gina looks forward to seeing the sunset in Laguna de Bay, spending lazy hours while waiting for mermaids and just being with family and friends. And of course, eating sinuwe, bibingka and puto bumbong in this most wonderful time of the year.

Good things will come to US immigrants in 2010

IMFO
Lourdes Santos Ignacio

I RECENTLY MET MONTA, A retired teacher and widow who now lives alone in her 3-bedroom house in California. She has a son who lives with his own family in another state. Monta is no longer looks forward to the holiday season and downplays the festive spirit around her. She claims that Christmas is just another day and the New Year will just be another year. Relatives rarely visit her. Everyone she knows is busy with her own everyday challenges.

Legislation passed

Monta represents the sentiment of many Filipino Americans, though her thinking may not be uncommon, I would tell any that many of us remain thankful for surviving another year of challenges.

For many Filipino immigrants, important legislation passed into law rendered new benefits as well as new hope for what is yet to come.

One of the significant bills signed into law by President Obama in 2009 was the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 or the "Stimulus Bill." Billions of dollars were appropriated under this law for many US businesses, financial institutions and other government agencies to stir up the economy included in this stimulus package is a $100-billion education for the 21st century Equity Compensation, which is more commonly known as the lump sum benefit for Filipino World War II veterans.

Three benefits of $15,000 and $9,000 were released recently in March 2009 and each time to be disbursed to Filipino veterans living in the US as well as those living in the Philippines. This is considered by some veterans as their "stimulus" money in their struggle for recognition.

Many veterans' veterans groups and their supporters, however, believe that the lump sum is simply a monetary benefit. These groups are of the opinion that the monetary payment has not addressed their claim for justice and equal treatment. As many soldiers and veterans continue to be excluded from the lump sum benefit, the more these veterans groups claim that there is still inequity in the way the Americans treat the Filipino veterans.

Ray of hope

In the area of immigration, an amendment in certain provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act was incorporated in a new bill signed by Obama. It contains immigration benefits for survivors of deceased petitioners residing in the US as well as widows of US citizens. It gives a chance to certain family members to get their green cards, even if the spouse or relative who petitioned for them is already dead.

Loss of jobs for many Filipino-Americans also means loss of benefits like health coverage. Employees who lose their jobs usually also lose their health insurance coverage. Many uninsured Filipinos are looking forward to the passage of the new health care bill, which promises affordable insurance coverage to an estimated additional 31 million Americans. As of this writing, both the House and the Senate have already approved their respective versions of the health care bill. Once the two bills are reconciled, the health care bill will be signed into law, possibly in early 2010.

The debate on a comprehensive immigration reform involving the will hopefully begin as soon as the health care is passed into law. Without waiting for the health care act, one legislator from Illinois, Luis Gutierrez, recently introduced an immigration bill two weeks ago. It is called the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity (CIRAASP) Act of 2009. So far, this bill has 87 co-sponsors.

Once this bill is passed into law, there will be an "earned adjustment program" for the undocumented immigrants in the US. Temporary visas for six years with employment authorization and travel documents will be given to them.

With the high unemployment rates in the US, the immigration issue is expected to become very controversial. Anti-immigrant groups are already opposing any form of legalization of undocumented immigrants.

Undocumented

They claim that undocumented immigrants grab jobs from US citizens and legal residents. These who support the legalization of undocumented immigrants, however, claim that the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants were already employed even before the economic crisis and with the economic, a big percentage of these have likewise lost their employments as well.

For the Filipino World War II veterans, the introduction of this CIR-ASAP bill also brings new hope that their children's pensions will soon be processed if the bill is passed. There is a specific provision in the bill, which provides that sons and daughters of Filipino World War II veterans are exempt from the annual numerical limit. It means that the long period of wait for their paternity dates to become current would soon no longer apply.

Most of the more than 4 million Filipino immigrants to the US remain optimistic of what it is to come for 2010. There are good indications that are already on our way to an economic recovery with improvement in the employment rates.

The last couple of years have been challenging for every immigrant. So one has been spared from the effects of the economic crisis. However, in the circle of life, good things as well as bad things happen. We just need to hold on to the belief that some taken things back to us. Our self always come when things will get better. We just need to take responsibility by taking action and doing our part to adjust to our predicaments in life. Good things are coming our way. Be happy and hopeful. Save free to life!

(You have may be reached at lisa@lisasantos.com or at 888 7177).

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

2 more Irish bishops quit over child abuse

DUBLIN—TWO MORE Catholic bishops in Ireland resigned on Christmas Day in the wake of a damning investigation into decades of Church cover-up of child abuse in the Dublin archdiocese.

Dublin Bishops Eamonn Walsh and Jim Field offered an apology to child-abuse victims as they announced their resignations during Christmas Mass. Priests read the statement to worshippers throughout the archdiocese, home to a quarter of Ireland's 4 million Catholics.

Earlier this month two other bishops, Donal Murray of Limerick and Jim Moriarty of Kildare, quit following the Nov. 26 publication of a three-year investigation into why so many abusive Dublin priests escaped justice for so long.

The government-ordered investigation found that Dublin Church leaders spent decades shielding more than 170 pedophile priests from the law. They began providing information to police only in 1999—but continued to keep secret, until 2004, many files and other records of reported abuse.

In a joint statement, Walsh and Field said they hoped their resignations "may help to bring the peace and reconciliation of Jesus Christ to the victims [and] survivors of child sexual abuse. We again apologize to them."

"The thoughts and prayers we wish those who have so bravely spoken out and those who continue to suffer in silence," the bishops' statement said.

The Dublin archdiocese has faced a rising tide of civil lawsuits from abuse victims since the mid-1990s, after one abuse victim, former altar boy Joe Mcallister, went public with the Church's effort to buy his silence and protect a serving priest. The archdiocese estimates its ultimate bill for settlements and legal costs may top 200 million euros ($300 million).

A fifth serving bishop named in the investigation, Martin Drennan of Galway, insists he did nothing to endanger children and won't resign—the line initially adopted by the other four bishops, too.

"Martin Drennan will have to resign. He never left accountability," Madden said. He criticized the bishops' initial position that "in a group they were very apologetic, but individually they had done nothing wrong."

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, a veteran Vatican diplomat put in charge of Dublin in 2004 with a brief to confront the abuse scandal, welcomed the resignations. Walsh had been a bishop since 1998, Field since 1997.

Martin said in an interview that the Church "must remove from the management of the past is entrusted to a new generation of people who think differently."

Earlier, in his Christmas sermon, Martin said the Church for too long placed its self-interest above the rights of its parishioners, particularly innocent children.

"It has been a painful year," he told worshippers at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral in Dublin. "But the Church today may well be in a better and safer place than was the Church of 25 years ago—when all looked well, but where deep shadows were kept hurried." —AP

In remarks to Dublin's thousands of victims of clerical child abuse, Martin said, "No words of apology will ever be enough for the hurt caused and the way your hurt was brushed aside."

The 720-page report into abuse cover-ups in Dublin from 1940 to 2004 criticized the retired bishops, including Martin's predecessor Cardinal Desmond Connell, for transferring pedophile priests between parishes rather than report them to police.

But the investigators also found that, even when senior police officers did receive complaints from parents of abused children, they trusted the Church to deal with the issue—and sometimes handed reports of child-molesting priests straight back to bishops for them to handle. AP

Asia remembers day ocean unleashed its fury

BANDA ACEH, INDONESIA—PEOPLE across Asia paused Saturday to remember the day five years ago when an undersea earthquake unleashed a devastating wave that killed more than 230,000 people.

A solemn day of prayers and remembrance in mark one of the world's worst natural disasters was held in Indonesia's Aceh province, which lost almost 170,000 people in the Asian tsunami of December 26, 2004.

Prayers were said in mosques throughout the unusually Islamic province, and hordes mass graves near the local capital of Banda Aceh.

At the site of one of the graves, where more than 14,000 unidentified victims are buried, an elderly woman sat on the ground weeping and reciting Koranic verses for the ill members of her family who died.

"None of my family members survived in the tsunami: My children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters. They all have gone and left me alone here," Siti Aminah, 72, told AFP.

"This is the mass grave situated close to my residence blocks. They may be buried here or might have been swept away by sea as we were living by the beach," she said.

Aminah, a spice seller, was on the second floor of a local market building some five kilometers (three miles) from her family home, when the tsunami struck.

"Though I don't know for sure where they were buried, I always come here every year to pray for them so that God will let them rest in peace," she said.

Some two kilometers away, Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla led a number prayer ceremony in the port of Ulee Lheu in memory of those lost in the tsunami.

"Five years on, Acehnese people with support from international communities have managed to rise again and to lead a new life to rebuild their social, economic and cultural life in a peaceful situation," he told about 1,000 residents, schoolchildren and officials.

In Sri Lanka, the anniversary was marked with a nationwide two-minute silence in memory of the tens of thousands of local victims.

State-run radio and television stations halted their regular programs at 8.25 (3.55 GMT), about the time the tsunami hit.

An estimated 31,000 people were killed in Sri Lanka, while a million people were driven out of their homes.

Similar scenes were expected to play out in countries such as India and Thailand where a total of some 20,000 people were killed as the wall of water smashed into coastal communities.

But as the survivors mourned their dead, reports said that many countries in the region remain ill-prepared to face another killer wave.

The 2004 tsunami was triggered by a 9.3-magnitude undersea quake off the coast of Sumatra. AFP

INDONESIAN Buddhists pray and release offerings to the sea to mark the anniversary of the Dec. 26, 2004 tsunami. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Iran's Neda named 'person of the year'

LONDON—A British newspaper on Saturday named an Iranian woman shot dead during protests against her country's disputed June elections as its "person of the year." The Times said Neda Agha-Soltan became a "global symbol of opposition to tyranny" after images of her bleeding to death during the protests in Tehran were shown around the world. "Ms Soltan, 26, joined the protest because she was outraged at the way that the regime stole the presidential election," the newspaper said on its front page. Had instead used a photograph of protesters in the days before the election. "She wanted to show the world that Iranians were different," she said. She had no idea quite what an impact she would have. Mobile phone footage of her bleeding to death on a pavement flashed around the world. It took the real streets of legitimacy from the regime, made her a global symbol of opposition to tyranny and reignited the Green Movement in a region where populations are often easily roused." AFP

NEDA Agha-Soltan

Japan passes record trillion-dollar budget

TOKYO—The Japanese government on Friday approved a record trillion-dollar budget for the next fiscal year that vows massive ambitious welfare outlays to help households cope with the country's deep economic woes, but the scale of new spending could revive investor jitters about the government's burgeoning debt. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, who took office in September after landmark elections that ended an era of single-party rule in Japan, has been trying to strike a balance between a budget big enough to kick-start economic recovery while keeping new lending in check. He has been distracted, however, by outstanding negotiations over the US military base in Japan and by a campaign finance scandal. On Thursday, Hatoyama apologized to the nation after two aides were charged with falsely reporting donations, though he denied any wrongdoing on his part. AFP

Actor Charlie Sheen arrested in US

ASPEN, COLORADO—Actor Charlie Sheen spent the better part of Christmas Day in a jail cell after being arrested on domestic violence allegations. The 44-year-old actor was taken into custody Friday morning by officers responding to an emergency call from a house in the ski resort area in the state of Colorado. Sheen, the star of CBS' "Two and a Half Men," was taken to the Pitkin County jail and booked for investigation of second-degree assault and menacing, both felonies, along with criminal mischief, a misdemeanor. Aspen police spokeswoman Stephanie Cleere said. He was released in the late afternoon after posting $5,500 bond and being advised by a county judge on the conditions of his release, she said. AP

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US Catholic hospitals, bishops split on abortion compromise

WASHINGTON...IN AN APPARENT SPLIT with Roman Catholic bishops over the abortion-financing provisions of the proposed health-care overhaul, the nation's Catholic hospitals have signaled that they back the Senate's compromise on the issue, raising hopes of breaking an impasse in Congress and relieving controversy within the Church.

The Senate bill, approved Thursday morning, allows any state to bar the use of federal subsidies for the insurance plans that cover abortions and requires insurers in other states to divide subsidy money into separate accounts so that only dollars from private premiums would be used to pay for abortions.

Just days before the bill passed, the Catholic Health Association, which represents hundreds of Catholic hospitals across the country, said in a statement that it was "encouraged" and "increasingly confident" that such a compromise "can achieve the objective of no federal funding for abortion." An umbrella group the name followed its lead.

The same day the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops slammed the proposed compromise as "morally unacceptable."

The divide between some of the most contentious issues facing House and Senate negotiators as they try to produce a bill that can pass in both chambers.

For months, the Catholic bishops have driven a lobbying campaign to bar anyone who receives insurance subsidies under the proposed overhaul from using them to buy coverage that included abortion. AOT

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IN THIS ISSUE
■ Nurse trades in uniform for coffee brewer's apron /B2

Wanted: Young coffee growers

Most of the 30,000 coffee farmers are between 60 and 80 years old

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE COUNTRY needs a new breed of coffee farmers to sustain and make the industry competitive, an official of the Philippine Coffee Board said.

Emmanuel Trinidad, Northern Cabiz coordinator of the PCB, said the country only has about 30,000 coffee farmers, most of them between 60 and 80 years old.

WANTED: B2

DEMAND for coffee continues to grow, but the need for young farmers...

Ayala Land unveils its 2010 plans in multiple growth centers

Fresh from meeting 2009 head-on in the face of global economic recession, the country's most trusted real estate company, Ayala Land, Inc. (ALI) goes full throttle next year with a more aggressive posture.

Ayala Land takes on 2010 with the most number of new projects to be launched within a single year ever. Antonino T. Aquino, Ayala Land president, announces new initiatives on the established tenet of multiple growth centers across the Philippines to bring to more areas the well-recognized expertise of Ayala Land in enhancing land, enriching lives. He says, "We'll have the busiest year ever as we're expanding in geography, in the products that we offer including new business lines and in the market segments that we cater to. There will be a dynamic interplay of our projects and where we used to be focused only on the traditional segments, now we'll be expanding for the benefit of our customers."

There is no landscape too small or too large to change

"We are thinking of more than a dozen different locations, starting off in the North with Baguio, Angeles in Pampanga, Subic and in five locations in Southern Philippines namely Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Iloilo and Bacolod. We are making sure that we are coming around with product offerings that are best suited for the market and which will show the best practices that Ayala Land is known for," he states, as he proceeds to give an overview of activities to take place.

In Baguio next year, the retail area and the BPO complex will begin development in Camp John Hay, allowing customers to enjoy the natural beauty of Baguio. Meanwhile in Subic, a building development will arise with a mix of retail, BPO and residential components.

In Pampanga, the company relishes the market acceptance of the Marquee mall in lands beyond expectations. "In the pipeline for the area is a very nice residential development right across the mall. It will be a mid-rise project with a Bevarotta feel," enthuses Aquino.

With the successful expansion this year of Ayala Center Cebu with The Terraces, the company is set to have its first foray with Arvo and Avida offerings in the first quarter in Cebu.

Meanwhile in Davao, where Ayala Land cosponsored its entry with the Ilumyle mall, Abreeza Mall, new residential developments are slated to be launched coupled with a BPO complementary project, dubbe Aquino. Similar mixed-use developments are also planned for in Cagayan de Oro.

Northpoint, a project of Ayala Land Premier in Bacolod, will host a new commercial development along the inner road fronting it, making the area a multiple growth center. Aquino points out, "The whole idea behind our multiple growth center strategy is to highlight our mixed-use experience as a major differentiator of our organization. We're known for how we master-plan things and how our projects develop into secondtech growth centers, bringing in a new lifestyle." This will also be realized in the mixed-use project to be developed in Iloilo.

In the Greater Manila Area, where Ayala Land focused largely in Makati and in the South, year 2010 sees the company pushing

NEXT PAGE

Ayala Land takes on 2010 with the most number of new projects to be launched within a single year ever

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Think big, start small

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

THE FIRST LEADERSHIP CONference I ever did was quite memorable—not because it was such a resounding success, but because it was so public.

I spent a week in Kansas City learning leadership to a round of 17 people. Yes, you read that right. Seventeen people! Even I—who didn't know what they were getting into—they sat there and listened to me bleat for an hour, top to bottom, for two straight days.

By the last day, I'm sure they hadn't learned a thing; they were just solemnly hoping for me to stop so they could go home!

That was more than 20 years ago. At the time, I had no way of knowing that I would eventually host my own leadership conference and write numerous books about the subject. In fact, the only thing I knew was that I was going to lose $3,000 if I didn't overcome the lack-of-participation.

But I wanted to reach leaders, that's why I knew I had to start somewhere. So I went for it.

When conferencing started to pull off a dream or the start of a new venture, for many people are hesitant to begin because they can't comprehend the entire journey. If that's where you find yourself right now, don't allow that to get in the way. Just take the next step.

There's no shame in starting small; in fact, if you don't start small, you'll probably never start at all.

Why else should you start small? There are three reasons:

1. It encourages you to get started.

Accomplishing a small step helps provide the motivation you need to advance the next step. Have you ever put off starting a project—revising your company's employee handbook, developing a new marketing plan, reworking your resume, learning a new computer program, or cleaning out your garage—because it was just too overwhelming?

Well now it needn't be so daunting. Tell you keep thinking, "It's too big and it's never going to happen!" Well, that mindset, you're right—it won't happen. But if you break that project down into small pieces and tackle one at a time, the whole thing suddenly becomes much less daunting and much more doable.

2. It allows you to practice and concentrate.

Mother Teresa once said, "If you can't feed a thousand, then feed one." Time is precious and you're juggling priorities.

There are many reputable people who could lead one but aren't. Perhaps they've just been satisfying they could lead a thousand. Starting small helps you concentrate on what you can do now—which often paves the way for bigger things later.

3. It provides the necessary steps to take the next step.

You can only expand your life if you're moving. As my friend Tim Elmore has noted, "You can't cross a bridge you've not yet come to."

When I talk about the importance of starting small, I'm not trying to dampen your enthusiasm or stifle your dreams. I'm simply giving you a practical way to address your current reality. Think big, but start small.

Don't despise these simple steps. Most folks don't. They say big but leadership conferences never, you never know where they're going to lead.

Contact the Investigator, The Leader Within You Workshop at
answers 28-562-2630 or the Editor
Maxwell's upcoming three-day
certified by Maxwell's Penny's King
Gill Harper Leadership Conference at
(877) 235-4929.

A FLOOR OF BUTANGUEÑA, an organization for the Philippines, two-year-old publication, CNN Traveller and Shiki Spa, told three more accolades to the country.

The latest winner and joint edition of CNN Traveller showcases The Farm at San Benito in Batangas as one of the world's best green places to stay.

The wellness and health resort set amid 46 hectares of coconut palm forest, lagoons and gardens in Luzon City makes it to CNN Traveller's list of Six Best Environmentally Friendly Hotels in the world.

It is listed number four after Banyan Tree Lang Ranch, Sheikh's Chira Castle, and Australia's Lizard Island Resort and Spa, followed by Brazil's Fazenda Lodge and Switzerland's Whitepod.

The magazine, which focuses on conservation, the environment, and local cultures, is distributed in CNN stations hotels in Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Asia, Australia, Canada, the Caribbean and Latin America as well as on the newsstand in the United Kingdom.

CNN Traveller

CNN Traveller defines the Batangas resort's traditional Philippine design of nipa huts, stone and wood furnishings, and "environmentally friendly."

It goes by its mission of locally sourced products in its application of a holistic wellness philosophy. It has its own organic plantation that produces much of its vegan food and spa ingredients.

It credits The Farm with employing and training a significant proportion of local staff "from its surrounding farms."

Before the CNN Traveller feature, there was the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award given by Asia-Spa magazine.

Asia Spa

In an evening dominated by big hotel names last November 22 in Hong Kong, the Philippines garnered two of 27 awards voted on by 20 independent judges to best in the region.

Shiseido Spa & Villas in Boracay won the Spa Destination of the Year but its "Olive Trilogy" treatment to indigenous Filipino healing techniques is an interesting one.

The Farm at San Benito in Batangas was voted Spa Cuisine of the Year—for the second time (the first was in 2006)—for its organic and vegan gourmet rendition of traditional Philippine dishes, such as tuna, kalo-kalo and lumpia.

Nurse trades in uniform for coffee brewer's apron

By Maurice Malanes
Inquirer Mindanao Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Many Filipino parents encourage their children to pursue a career, which, they believe, would lead to "greener pastures."

A path-weaved entrepreneurship would be the last thing on their mind even if their children had shown potential to succeed.

April Lee Balanon, for example, was urged to take up nursing after finishing high school three years ago.

Her parents, grandmother and other relatives here so take up a course, which, they said, could land her a job overseas. But after a year and one semester, Balanon quit nursing school, to the disappointment of his loved ones who pushed and supported her financially to take up the course.

Unknown to them, Balanon didn't see herself cleaning hospital bedpans and taking care of patients. She wanted to do something else.

"Nursing really was not my line and no matter how they pressure, persuade, insist and even threaten me, I could not pursue something which I could not be happy with," said Balanon, 19, the second in a brood of four.

Barista course

After quitting nursing school, Balanon drifted for a while as she did some soul-searching.

Then a friend, who had just finished a short course on bartending at a Tesda-(Technology Education and Skills Development Authority) accredited school in Baguio, encouraged Balanon to also enroll in one.

Balanon chose to enroll in a barista training course from said. January to mid-February this year.

Compared to her nursing school, Balanon found her barista training much more fun.

She said she enjoyed blending scented Arabica coffee with Robusta, and preparing espresso, cappuccino, cafe latte and other beverages.

That Balanon took up barista training was not accidental. Coffee had caught her fancy even while she was a child growing up in Sitio Village in Baguio City.

She said the intense voice of roasting coffee she beamed at the Tesda school brought back memories when, as an 8-year-old girl, she would stay in the arms of coffee, which her parents brewed in their kitchen.

"I just loved the aroma of coffee even since I was child," she said.

Inspiring break

After finishing her training, Balanon looked for jobs that would make use of her newly acquired skill. She ended up as a waitress in a Baguio restaurant.

But since August, she learned to come dark Café Mahong up, a coffee shop in this town, was in need of a barista.

She grabbed the opportunity and she has never been helping prepare the hot coffee from Arabica beans grown in the Cordillera.

The shop's owners, couple Richard and Charmaine Abellon, are advocates of a coffee industry that encourages Cordilleran to go beyond growing Arabica, the most expensive coffee in the world.

The Abellons encourage others to engage in the coffee industry and promote other industries like marketing, roasting, packaging, cupping (the art of tasting quality coffee), barista training and setting up coffee shops.

"We should not just settle for just growing coffee production. It is time for locals to learn the other processes to give value to coffee," Richard Abellon said.

Competition

The Abellons encouraged Balanon to join a regional barista competition in November, which was part of the Department of Tourism's "Sitsit Philippines!" promotional activities.

Joining such a competition for the first time, Balanon was nervous. She learned that the eight other contestants were competitors, veterans, one of whom was from the Diwata Ilocano-based Philippine Barista Academy.

The tool to perform among such contestants, Balanon beat the 15-minute time-slot in preparing her cappuccino and espresso, a signature cold coffee beverage. While espresso-tasting and cupping are standard fare in any coffee shop, the cold coffee beverage was her invention.

"I just applied everything I learned from my barista training," she said. "The one I called on instant coffee and I was surprised that I got the first spot. Although the years after learning to brew and drink coffee at an early age in our kitchen."

A day after the decision from the four judges, two of them rapping experts from Metro Manila, was announced, Balanon was surprised and inspired. She topped the contest, making her the first Igorota to win in such a competition.

"It was a big break for me," said Balanon, a daughter of Ignore parents. "Here I could prove something to myself, (parents, grandmother and) after I disappointed them when I quit nursing."

Balanon said with her barista skills, she can now make choices.

She said she can still apply for a job overseas, now enough money and certain home to start her own coffee shop.

HOME young Filipinos are holding a career in the coffee industry

Wanted: Young coffee growers

From page B1

The PCB, Torrijos said, a idea urging agriculture schools in the country to offer courses on coffee farming and processing to spark interest among the youth to revitalize the coffee industry.

"These old farmers need to be replaced as the next future by younger, creative farmers to sustain the industry. Our farmers are too old and we are worried about who to go to in the future," Torrijos said.

He said the board partly attributed the decline in coffee production to the waning interest of local farmers to cultivate their coffee plantations and who prefer to plant high-yielding cash crops.

"In the 1980s, we produced 60,000 metric tons (MT), especially, but at present we only produce 28,000 MT. Why did that happen? The old trees were no longer productive, and many farmers had lost interest in growing coffee," Torrijos said.

He, however, urges some hope as some state colleges and universities that encourage their students to try coffee growing.

Torrijos said the Cavite State University is offering a course on coffee specialization while the Benguet State University's school of agriculture has included coffee farming in one of its research programs.

He said old coffee farmers are passionate and encourage patience in cultivating coffee trees that live young.

"But we also need new blood ... because they can be more experimentative, innovative and creative and they are more open to [using new] technologies," Torrijos said.

Richard Abellon, coordinator of the Cordillera Regional Arabica Coffee Council (CRACC), said coffee is considered more of a "household crop" than a commercial crop by most Cordillera farmers.

"Old farmers have a deep appreciation of the value of coffee. In our region, there is not much appreciation ... because farmers give more attention to vegetable farming, which farms from three months. They (prefer to focus on these) vegetable gardens (where they can harvest in a shorter period), unlike coffee trees that only bear fruit after three to five years," Abellon said.

He said coffee growing in the Cordillera remains a backyard industry.

"The price of the coffee is still low in the international market. Although there is an coffee farming, Arabica coffee beans used to sell for P72 a kilogram. Now it sells for P140 a kg, but this is not yet a fair trade price," he said.

Abellon said even traders have low regard for coffee because they see the volume and not quality of coffee that their produce are not up to standard.

WITH the number of schools teaching students to be coffee farmers, there's hope for the future of the industry

"Coffee farmers should be organized so they will be in a better bargaining position. They can help each other ensure that they would produce and sell good quality coffee," he said.

Reports from the Department of Agriculture showed that the Philippines used to be the top producer and exporter of coffee in Asia. Declining harvest and the conversion of coffee plantations into other purposes resulted in importation since 1993.

In reports said the country imports around 20,000 to 28,000 MT of coffee beans, worth P76 million, a year.

SMEs hit by climate change get gov't help

From page B1

ment confronted by immobility such as climate change) one star rose [2014].

Most of the enterprises that thrive in the Cordillera and to coastal La Union and Pangasinan provinces are involved in food processing, based on the business profiles released by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Marvin Delos, DTI Cordillera director, said the Cordillera's resources (ingredients of renowned brands like Benguet's coffee and strawberries) or business from Abra.

The three provinces' business profiles, on the other hand, "is predominantly business (middle) oriented," said Thelma Lord, DTI Benguet director.

Government is mapping out the future of Philippine Agriculture, using models that address global warming, said Manuel Rivera, Cordillera director of the Department of Agriculture Region (DARC).

Rivera cited a report drawn up by government scientist Fe Ibbas Gotladera, which indicates that flooding in the Pampanga alone 20 percent (or 9.33 million hectares) of lots designated as Strategic Agricultural and Fishery Development Zones (SAFDZ).

By the end of this century, high temperatures could cause crop yield to decline by 10 percent, the report said.

According to DSCorp, it presented to the 92.7 billion in losses during the third quarter.

"The increasing unemployment rates are indicators of the congressional's commitment to the government's aim to provide jobs. We want to see more establishments, an environment for entrepreneurship by making loans readily available. [In] the country's poorest areas," said DSCorp chair Virgilio Angeles in a statement.

Diner gets a makeover

GOODMUNCH, A PHILIPPINE-themed fast popularized quick-service and porridge meals like go-to, including the 24-hour, 7-days-a-week type of service that is tailored-fit during its time, is back with a rejuvenated appeal and at the same time is looking forward to new horizons.

GoodMUNCH is known in the quick service restaurant (QSR) business as the epitome of colloquial terms like "Open 24 hours," "Pagkatapos gasolina ko" and other catchy terms, plus the original concept of combining the syllables of various Filipino dishes into a single term like "tapa" (cured beef), "sinangag" (fried rice) and "itlog" (egg) to name up arsilo "tapsilog."

It even turned the local slang "kuya," which usually denotes, say, someone older, into something gastronomic (kuya kanin in sinangag).

After all those years, GoodMUNCH, the brand that pioneered a unique offering of Filipino dishes under the QSR model, is back under the new management company headed by food industry entrepreneur Timothy "Timmy" Yang.

"We know the brand's potential is definitely there since recall is still extremely high. In a survey, we thought those in their 40s will be the ones to remember but to our surprise, even those in their mid-20s knows GoodMUNCH quite well," explains Yang.

Now that the company is back in full swing, it's back in business—review everything, improve on what needs to be improved, look at the functions of all departments, the purchasing principles and policies, working closer with suppliers, upgrading of the commissary and the whole company.

Several aspects of the store will also be different like the new GoodMUNCH logo.

But other elements will remain, like the traditional colors, the al fresco feel and the casual dining environment.

"At the end of the day GoodMUNCH is the place where anybody can come in and eat regardless of socioeconomic status because you go there for the food. It's still be an unpretentious place where what you wear, what your car is doesn't really matter; you just enjoy your dining experience," he says.

He adds that there will be slight menu changes.

"We'll make sure we are the best when it comes to gato, tapsilog, tokwa't baboy, and we'll stay the best but from time to time, you'll see promotional items. We will also adjust prices according to the times but we will make sure that price value is maintained," he says.

Timmy said that for the first six months, the company will focus on building and recovering the number of stores, starting with the new one in Bicutan.

Quill karaoke GoodMUNCH sports a new look

Ayala Land unveils its 2010 plans in multiple growth centers

this, with plans for development covering the North Triangle area in Quezon City. Ayala Land again manifested its expertise in masterplanning, envisioning for the city a thriving business district that Quezon City still needs to date. "We want this to happen in a shorter time as we know there are business hoosiers and partners who would like to see the planning of the area accomplished sooner," Aquino declares.

A piece of land is never just a piece of land

In the coming months, Ayala Land, Inc. will be introduced as a new product in the retail segment will be the neighborhood and community centers. These will be quaint shops and retail establishments that will support residential and BPO developments. Ayala Land is also exploring hotels and tourism-related products to expand its portfolio.

Expansion projects and the opening of new phases of other existing developments are also set to go on full swing.

Ayala Land's continued redevelopment of Ayala Center is brought to another exciting stage with the opening of the Ayala Triangle Gardens. According to Aquino, this will be the starting point for ramping up the Makati Central Business District with projects that will include upgrading the Glorietta retail center as well as launching a high-end residential play for Ayala Land Premier in that area, very much like how The Residences at Greenbelt (TRAG) is just a walk away from the mall. Other residential offerings by Ayala will be in the office enclaves of Sedcodi and Legaspi Village. "These are excellent follow throughs for the continued upscaling of the areas in Makati," he describes.

The Bonifacio Global City (BGC), more popularly recognized as the home of Passionate Metro, will witness Manhattan High Streets expansion to complete its 1-kilometer development plan to end closer to the Mind Museum, which will be the best science museum in the country. Also known as the "live, work, and play" zone, the city will likewise witness next year the addition of another building offering a total of 31,000 sqms of BPO space along with the launch of Avida Towers BGC and a new phase of Ten Serendra, The Mineral.

More will be benefiting from Ayala Land's quality and level of service

Alabang will in turn follow thru with enhancements at the Alabang Town Center with an additional retail complex featuring department stores and supermarkets. Aquino added that Avida Towers Alabang will also be launched.

Further South in Laguna, the country's first eco-community and now regarded as the nation's sustainability capital is Ayala Land's portfolio. NUVALI, earlier enjoyed highly successful take-up for its Ayala Land Premier (ALP) offerings Jaro, Montecito and serenity Santuario.

The sterling record provided fresh proof of Ayala Land's ability to offer unique and highly-valued propositions to the high-end market. Where Ayala Westgrove Heights and Ayala Greenmist Estates further South fulfilled demand for upscale businesses, rolling hills and private estate environments, these new ALP offerings in NUVALI addresses particular aspirations for sustainable lifestyles.

Aimes will also be launching a project in NUVALI in the 2nd quarter of next year, while Avida will be expanding with Avida Settings Phase 3 and introducing new products, Avida Village NUVALI and Avida Condos NUVALI.

Aquino also announced the introduction of more retail elements in NUVALI alongside the Sta.Rosa-Tagaytay road, with the construction of a new supermarket that enhances the Solaire retail area which has already scored distinct success in its profusion of dining, shopping and convenience retail in the area.

"We expect NUVALI's overall retail success and launch of residential developments to add to the attractions of One Evotech as a premium space for BPO locators," states Aquino as he reveals the addition of the second BPO building next year.

Avida will be very busy launching some new phases in its existing developments, the Tower 3-for Avida Towers New Manila, Tower 5-for Avida Towers Cain Lasayo, and Tower 7 of Avida Towers Sucat, all to be launched in the 1st quarter and Avida Settings Phase 2 in Cavite in the 2nd quarter.

Cebu's Amara and Alegria Hills in Cagayan De Oro will likewise see the addition of new phases.

A testament to enriching lives for more people

To top it all off, Ayala Land will be coming up with a breakthrough by launching projects in 2010 entering a new market segment, Aquino announces. "As part of making our daily residential needs and comforts more affordable, we will be benefiting from Ayala Land's quality and level of service through Amaia. This is distinguished as the economic housing line of Avida, ushering Ayala Land's entry into a wider market, the very people who raised us more. Amaia will offer house and lot packages with prices ranging from P700,000 to P1 million, to provide them with a high-quality product for their hard-earned money." Amaia presents its maiden offerings in Laguna early next year.

"As we continue to finetune our products, our core competency on masterplanning is not distinct advantage and we want more and more people to benefit from it. This is part of our key thrust for the years to come, corporate social responsibility. This will be more integrated into Ayala Land's business models; not as delicate but being more powerful as a driver for economic growth," declares Aquino.

He further states, "Ayala Land exists to deliver significant value to our customers through value appreciation as we come close to the completion of each growth center. We view these growth centers as contributors to nation-building as our projects are not only reaching more socio-economic classes but they are also magnets for more economic development by generating employment, energizing suppliers and the service sectors, and supporting business in revenue generating industries like in retail, business process outsourcing (BPO) and tourism."

Aquino concludes, "As Ayala Land faced 2009 with its many challenges, our brand values of integrity, reliability and commitment shaped and transformed our plans for the year, and we will continue to fulfill our promise to be your most trusted real estate developer."

Ayala Land, enhancing land, enriching lives for more people.

For more information about Ayala Land, you may log on to www.ayalaland.com.ph

Sunday **BIZ**

Earning good cash from organic fish feed

By Yolanda Savale
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BONTOC, MOUNTAIN PROVINCE—The increasing cost of fertilizer and commercial feeds has become a bane to the overseas asset, with fishpond owners and operators going back to organic fertilizer to produce organic food for their cultured tongue (tanblid).

It has also benefited couple Felipe and Alegria Bondoc, who buy and sell chicken manure and tobacco dust (actually tobacco leaves rejected by cigarette manufacturers) used to grow kikiak, an organic fish feed, in fishponds.

Order of chicken manure and tobacco dust increases as prices of chemical fertilizer and commercial feeds rise, they say.

The Bontocs have been in the business for almost 40 years, and as of late, more fishpond owners and operators in the province are getting their supplies from them.

Priscilla Pascuito, chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' Dagupan research center, says this is a welcome development because chemical fertilizer and assorted fish feed are not only costly but they also pollute waters.

He says chicken manure is an effective fertilizer to grow kikiak—partly lumot (filamentous and partly planktonic microscopic organisms) that looks like a mat of organic material found on the floor of fishponds.

Tobacco dust as pesticide

Records says kikiak grows naturally in the fishponds of Dagupan City, but pond owners elsewhere seem to be fertilized for it to grow. Tobacco dust acts as pesticide that kills unwanted shells in ponds. It tones into fertilizer when it decays.

Fishpond owner Jun Aquino of that town says many of his colleagues have shifted to using more organic fertilizer.

"Chemical fertilizer has become unaffordable for most of us. So we minimized its use and maximized the use of chicken manure," he says.

He says tobacco dust only when his ponds are infested with a type of shellfish, locally known as dorsal, that eat the kikiak, lowering almost nothing for the milkfish.

Aside from saving money by using organic fertilizers and pesticides, Aquino says they are also helping prevent the waters from pollution. He says chemicals make the ponds acidic, reducing their capacity to grow kikiak.

High in protein

"Organic materials condition the ponds, that once organic food is produced for the fish," he says.

Lablab is also high in protein, which makes it ideal as fish feeds.

However, it is difficult to grow enough kikiak for cultured fish until the harvest season.

Usually, what is produced is good only for about two months. Dangan cultivar takes about three months), and during the last weeks of cultivar season, the bongan is grown commercial feeds, Aquino says.

A disadvantage in using chicken manure is that a fishpond operator has to use much feeds for a human as compared to only two sacks of urea, he says.

But this means good business for the Bontocs, who sell chicken manure at P75 to P95 a sack and tobacco dust at P120 a sack.

On their own

According to Alegria Bontoc, she and her husband used to be caretakers of a 10-hectare fishpond in Binanday town for more than 30 years, during which they learned how to use chicken manure and tobacco dust to maximize growth of kikiak.

"We started buying and selling the manure and tobacco dusts while still employed, until we were able to save enough capital that enabled us to resign and focus on our business," she says.

From their savings, the couple bought a piece of land on which they built their house and a storehouse for tobacco dust. They also bought a used truck to transport chicken manure and tobacco dust.

When the truck broke down three years ago, they took out a P200,000 loan using their piece of land as collateral.

The loan was paid off in six months.

The couple buys tobacco dust in La Union and Isabela and chicken dung from poultry farms in Pangasinan.

FISHPOND owners are going back to nature's serving to organic feed to nurture their fish.

PC Express, desktop customizing leader and pioneer in the do-it-yourself PC segment, celebrates its 10th year with these amazing PC offers.

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SMEs hit by climate change get gov't help

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—Government financial institutions are drawing up credit rules more suited to small enterprises that rely on supplies affected by changing weather patterns and natural calamities.

With agricultural cycles changing due to observed weather patterns, the Small Business Corp. (SBCorp) has asked Malacañang to provide more seed capital to fund small

food industries that rely on farm and marine products, said Board Legislative Affairs Committee chief operating officer.

Lagos opened the SBCorp's Northern Luzon office here last month.

He said private corporations have been urging government "to take much larger risks on helping small businesses. [because] under a business environ-

(PLEASE TURN TO PAGE B5)

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Robert's faith

The guy, the social fixture able to merge the Marcoses, the Aquinos, the Ejercitos, among other powerful clans, has a story to tell in this season of hope

By Cherlie V. Moral

WHO IS ROBERT Castañeda?

Who is this man who's able to bring together a Marcos and an Aquino at a dinner party? Or Lourdes Rodrigues and former First Lady Lat Ejercito's Orange Ladies together in one photo? Or, very recently, Cecilia Villar and Shalani Soledad in a single frame?

He's a longtime friend of the Aquinos and has lately been mingling with the likes of Willie Revillame. He is an outspoken political supporter of the Villars, even as he ad-

ROBERT U-CA

KIYOTOSHI Etoh, Yoshimi Okuwaru, Ichie Ikeji, Nikki Gil, Hiroshi Goto, Sea Princess, Takaaki Hoshi, and Jun Ishihara

HALL of Asia GM Steven Tan, Sea Princess, Kenan Pascual and Marlon Garcia

CHEFS Mario Glenn Estrella and Roland Laudico

SAMBO Luna owner Virgie Ramos with Johanna and Dennis Valdez

CELEBRITY Diana Judges Freddie Santos, Sea Princess and Dean Avallone

ROBERT Cayton Jr. with lawyer Perry Pe

Under-the-sea motif for our house's holiday décor

THE CHRISTMAS HOUSE It never has. I didn't quite make it to the delivery deadline. I still have so many gifts (but I haven't delivered) I will just have to send these out for New Year's instead.

Considering we're country less the biggest Christian around, I should really learn to start choosing who's "naughty and nice" as soon as the "list" months arrive. Better, I should take tips from my mom, who starts wrapping gifts as early as July.

But it's hard to get into gifting when I'd rather be decorating. Our house didn't even look Christmas but a theme, and that year it is "Under the Sea," continuing the same theme from our 15th wedding anniversary in June.

When my husband Ronnie and I hold our annual holiday party, we are always fortunate that so many suppliers want to donate giveaway items. This year our party guests got items from: Sunrise Linen, Pirtus Mallari, Bebe Faucon-Sia, Dawn Bonoli, Freeway, National Bookstore, Erban Spa, Tanen and Capcakes by Sonja. We got Hari's to

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdez

cater and pumped up the events with Debbie Ryan Placido Co.

Helping me create that perfect under-the-sea motif was the Art Department of QTV's "Home Life." It was all for good, as we then shot our house's final episode in the house. "Home Life" really transformed my house to a mini-Disneyland.

To get a taste of Disney this Christmas, check out "Disney Dis Her" at the Araneta Coliseum. Per Ronnie, the "Disney Adventure" just started and will run until Jan. 3. Call Ticketnet at 9155555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph for tickets. There's nothing like a dose of the Big Dome to ryan the whole family.

The best way to get the kids into the spirit of Christmas is with a tree lighting ceremony. I attended a big one at the SM Mall of Asia recently. The 30-inch "Pitch It Just a Tree" was a joint activity of the entire SM family group of companies, aimed at providing Filipino with a proud symbol of love, hope and joy, especially after the crises we have faced this past year.

The activities were kicked off by host Nikki Gil, who assisted Hotlicks chairman Takaaki Hoshi as he donned a huge Christmas gift for the celebration of the election of typhoons "Ondoy" and "Pepeng." The Philippine National Red Cross officially received the donation, represented by program officer Ebenhizer Bullive.

Hoshi-san told me that "Hotlicks" means curries, but they have been such a great part of the Filipino household for so many years, providing as everything we use throughout the day, from electric fans to washing machines, that perhaps the better meaning for Atsushi is curries to extinct.

Culinary expo

Where there are Christmas trees, Christmas food cannot be far behind. The Manila Bistro is among our most treasured restaurants.

Sky Cable and the Asian Food Channel recently hosted a culinary expo entitled "A Feast for Christmas" at the SMX Convention Center. The event highlighted the culinary geniuses of culinary schools in the metro with the challenge of mini-preparing the traditional Noche Buena alongside a fashion styled for the table setup.

I was fortunate to participate along with students from the Global City Innovative College. The CEC Culinary's chefs' gastronomic masterpieces were coupled with table settings from Our Home.

Our team was composed of program director Nancy Dizon, Hilcaldo and chef instructor Rupert Garambang, along with students Anna Marie Espeleta, Judith Bayron, Richard David, Jennifer Ramirez, Norman Billy Santos, Khalil Soriano, Brian Tagalog and Jhon Dave Valencia, all of whom are from the school's Diploma in Culinary Arts program. Serving as team coach is Bistro Group's chef Roland Lanellen, one of the country's best chefs.

GCIC Culinary team wins biggest cooking contest

The CEC Culinary team also bagged coveted top prize in the cool only to the Center for Culinary Arts. For info on their programs, check www.gcic.edu.ph

"HOUSE Life" hosts and crew Christmas party at the Sea Princess' "Under the Sea" place

or call 7570500. "A feast for Christmas" was judged by pastry chef Henry Simon, Cook magazine editor-in-chief Nancy Reyes-Lumen, chef Dan Santiago and Philippine fashion and beauty columnist Jane Ringen-Cheng and photographer Bj Isaac.

Audi winners

Competitions are not to answered to beating the holiday season. The winners of the 1st Audi Quattro Cup Philippines just came back from Australia, where they represented the country in the Audi World Finals. The representatives of Easel Australasia and Nestlé today got an early Christmas holiday indeed, getting to try out the new Isuzu Subic Golf Club in Sydney.

Without a grand prize, the Audi Quattro Cup is one to be witnessed on the golf circuit next year. Robert Coquinco Jr., Audi Philippines' principal, and Antonio Tuason, chairman of the Makiling Golf and Country Club, which hosted the event, both told me that it will be very easy to join the Audi Quattro Cup in 2010. All one needs to do is to buy an Audi.

Well, it is Christmas after all, and it! The keys to a new Audi R8 would be the perfect stocking stuffer.

E-mail the author at avapriscos@inquirer.com.ph

Barrio doctors' healthcare is New Year gift to rural folk

WITH 118 MORE MEDICAL GRADUATES PASSING THE recent medical board exams this year, the First Generation (FG) Foundation Inc. had 10 more doctors to send to the barrios to take care of the health needs of people there. This group of young men and women anxiously and selflessly help poor rural communities to better manage their health care.

They have no goal except to pay it forward; spread to the poor the blessings they have received and continue to receive from the First Gentleman as orchestrated by Bagong Doktor Para sa Bayan. It is also now called Department of Health (DOH) barrio doctors—another pro-poor program fully supported by the First Gentleman from day one. What a better New Year — to be sponsored of having a doctor there to nurse when they become very sick.

Dr. Benjamin Dalit Jr.

One such doctor is Dr. Benjamin Dalit Jr. A native of Bulacan who finished medical school at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, Doc Benj, as he is fondly called, had put in many efforts, is now in the town of Dolfin Albano in Isabela as its Municipal Health Officer (MHO) aka barrio doctor.

Doc Benj told Anita Linmoan, president of FG Foundation Inc. "I can honestly say I am a changed man. And I owe this to the FG Foundation. Without its support and care, all of what I am now and what I do for the town of Dolfin Albano would not have happened without the FG Foundation. Whatever so-called miracles we deliver and all forms of services we provide, all of them happen through the generosity of FG. We cannot thank him enough for being a blessing to us barrio doctors and the communities we serve."

This sentiment must be shared by other barrio doctors all over the Philippines. By 2010, FG Foundation intends to have 150 doctors graduate and pass the board exams. The breakthrough operation on private hands. Anita Soliman intends to write about all this in a book called "101 Dreams" to be launched in May 2010.

Where is Dolfin Albano now?

The town of Dolfin Albano is a fourth class municipality in the province of Isabela. It was formerly known as Magsaysay. It has a population of 16,889 in 4,065 households, 29 barangays and one sitio serving a total land area of 19,000 ha. Bound with national and small farmers, the town has developed well to its new responsible town rankings, and the people of Dolfin Albano have learned to appreciate and love the new doctor in the house.

Since he became MHO, there has been a marked increase in the number of people seeking medical help. More and more people have begun to visit the municipal hall (MH). In the municipality. The RHU is clinics, barangay and accommodating.

When Dr. Benj finishes his one of duty in November 2010, he intends to specialize in surgery, so he can go back to Dolfin Albano to be their surgeon. He sees as the priority purpose of his medical practice. For more information, visit www.firstgentlemanfoundation.org.ph. If you know anyone who needs a medical scholarship, visit this website.

Seminarians need help

There's no end to the need for help and the need to help those who are very poor. The seminarians in the Diocese of Tuguegarao, for instance, need financial help to be able to pursue their studies. Fr. Cesar Tolentino, founder of the Holy Trinity College Seminary, told me there are 46 diocesan seminarians and 32 religious aspirants enrolled in the seminary. Most of them are too poor to continue.

He says want to become priests. Can we help them? Please write to Fr. Cesar Tolentino or deposit your donations at the Bank of the Philippine Islands (Cauayan branch) with savings account no. 3992-0049-12 and account name Holy Trinity College Seminary. Fr. Tolentino and only prayers and Masses offered for the intentions of donors is the only way to repay the donors' generosity. Text him at 0920-6306126.

'Sarsas, the Musical'

Although he was never a seminarian, theater director Nonoy Villanueva's obsession with the lives of saints brings him to research about their lives and make plays on them. He already did the life of St. Augustine for the 400th anniversary of Dilimán, San Fernando, the apparition of the Virgin of the Rose in Batasan for the 75th anniversary of the apparition, and the life of St. Scholastica.

Villanueva is currently working on the history of two musicals: "Tomas, the Musical" and "The Wiped de Bonavidas Story." Bernardo was the founder of the University of the Tomas.

Because of Bernardo' reverence for St. Thomas Aquinas and being a Thomist, Villanueva believes that he turned the university after the saint. For more info, please text 09.05.5832697 or call 5284454.

In praise of priesthood

Fr. Kevin Hitchcraft, SSC, celebrated the 50th anniversary of his priesthood at Our Lady of Remedies Parish in Malate last Dec. 22. Concentrating with him in his Jubilee Mass were his fellow Columbian missionaries, while his parishioners came in full force to wish him well. This column wishes him good health and more years of dedicated service to the Lord.

Healing priest Fr. Dionisio Cauas marked his 58th year as a priest last Oct. 11. He will hold a healing Mass on the First Friday, Jan. 1, 9 a.m., at the Sanctuary Healing Center in Lopez Village, Las Piñas. Fr. Cauas will hold "healing on the air" during the radio program "San Expedito, Ang Santong Mahalang Lapitan" on Jan. 16, 6-9 p.m. over Radyo Veritas 846 AM band.

Incidentally, during his healing ministry a Method Bapu.

New wishes to Fr. Bridge Cauas who marked his seventh year as a priest with a thanksgiving Mass in his San Carlos Seminary Parish in Batasan.

A blessed 2010 to all of you, dear readers. God bless you all.

Happy New Year!

PURELY PERSONAL

Evangelista Ebersole Danyang

MERALCO chair and CEO Manuel M. Lopez (right), and president and COO Jose P. de Jesus lead the lighting of the Meralco Christmas Display, Ateneo's Whags Barangay Maliwanag and the Meralco para sa iba branch after "Maliwanag ang Pasko 2009" campaign.

Meralco's lighting program raises funds for charity

MANILA ELECTRIC COMPANY'S (MERALCO) "Maliwanag ang Pasko" is a Christmas lighting program that calls on its customers to spread the light of Christmas.

At Meralco is associated with anything bright as "may liwanag," the campaign espouses the company's significance as the customers' yearlong partner in providing light, comfort and convenience, not only to their homes but to churches, carnivals and everywhere they go.

"This campaign is Meralco's contribution to drive everyone towards a greater community endeavor to light up," says Meralco's F. Dewpo, Meralco's head for Marketing Promotion. "It serves as a reminder that amidst all the uncertainties and challenges we are facing, there still always be hope."

The Meralco display project runs this year's campaign will see the lantern is placed not only as a symbol of hope and unity but also to remind everyone of the beauty of the Filipino culture of bayanihan, of helping one another overcome trials.

In the first year of the campaign, nine winners each from the house, church and street categories were awarded for their zeal in lighting and decorating through their own selfless initiatives and creativity.

This year, under the theme "Unity," "Maliwanag ang Pasko" joins the nation in taking Filipinos, rich or poor, to bundle all the communities that the country is facing.

Fifteen winners of P25,000 each will be chosen. Through the program, Meralco commits to donate an equivalent amount of the prizes and extend support to appointed charities of winning participants. This year's institutions are Caritas Manila, Hospicio de San Jose, Ladies of Charity ABC (Charity for the Aged), Make Given, Tahanang Walang Hagdanan and Manila Sojourners.

Should she demand child support from an ex-boyfriend?

DEAR EMILY,

I am a single mom of a 16-month-old girl. My problem is the father of my daughter has completely disappeared. Even our lives. I never saw him again since I was five months pregnant. Even can I demand for child support when he has changed his mobile number? I do have his family business address and office number but I haven't contacted him there. I never heard from him after I had him sign custody papers, but I think his condescending is that he will not be recognized as the father of my daughter.

I am willing to undergo DNA testing if it is required. How can this be? — Abandoned Mother

You were a very dumbey lesser and I can only grasp at the straws you've thrown my way to pursue your relationship with this man.

Were you ever married to him? If you are the legal wife, you have all the right to go to his family and demand support—moral and financial—for your daughter. But if you were just a girlfriend, he can always feign ignorance and give you the run-around especially if you cannot nail him down to do the tests.

You don't need DNA testing because you are already the mother, but he does if he wants to prove his paternity. This involves a lot of money.

What you can do if you are not the wife is...get a MCI respect hunting on or being a clinging vine to him even if he got you pregnant. For some men, sexual activity is tantamount to juggling or climbing a hill—an exercise, you know? The fact that he is nowhere to be found speaks volumes on how he feels for you. He does not love you! Probably never did! It hurts, but it's true!

How then can he love this child? There is no connection, excellently in this scenario he left with you—as far as he is concerned. He abandoned you when you were most vulnerable and there's no way he will see you again if he doesn't want to.

Get a job if you don't have any and stop thinking of ways to look for him. If nature can be disturbed like a dirty rag—how much more mere girlfriends! Be an independent woman and be something you can be proud of. Make your daughter respect you and put you on a pedestal when she's all grown up and able to appreciate what you've done for her. Make this creep regret what he did to you and realize you were not just a hole in the wall.

It was great relate it lasted. Stop moping for this jerk who was only good for one. Make up.

E-mail emarcelo@inquirer.com.ph.

EMILY'S POST

Emily A. Marcelo

Robert's faith

From page 61

talks to being a former Bluewa loyalist and a friend to Soledad, the executive girlfriend of presidential candidate Sen. Noynoy Aquino.

Still social strangers and they'd tell you Castañeda has been around a long time.

A successful fashion designer in the 1970s, he once made a genie for Hollywood beauty Brooke Shields in the film, he was hugging prime projects, including tuberculosis' uniforms in international events hosted by the country light, he admits, were partly caused by his close friendship with Ilse Marcos, Imperial Empire and Met Sarmiento.

One could say he made good with so by gate and pure daring as resource, it had student in every sense, he dropped out of high school in senior year ["I was slow, I couldn't relate anything this I read"].

In thought of a trade that wouldn't require him to go back to school, he liked to dress, and making clothes seemed an easy choice.

In 1980, he switched to buy-and-sell of jewelry. "I got tired," he simply says.

Drugs, travel, parties

As with fashion design, his business thrived, with upper-middle-class women buying the overpriced jewels he bought in HK Tsim, Castañeda lived the high life.

Spending ₱120,000 for a shopping trip to HK was typical. He went only on premier European brands, and gifted friends with the same. Mingling with rich from political families, he had to keep up with those lifestyle, he recalls.

He traveled with the children of then [illegible] Jose Aquino, and Karen Rose Jurdle.

Not long after, he discovered cocaine, dawkers, ecstasy. "I was a drug addict from 1980 to 1986," dual he was in the heart of the party scene, doing P6 for a [illegible] in Malate.

But 1980 was the turning point. He was invited to a Life in the Spirit Seminar, a Catholic renewal retreat in Baguio. He was never a spiritual man; his parents didn't go to church.

"I prayed, but only for three minutes. I have never before really experienced God," he says. "One time, I was searching Bingbong Crisologo's charismatic program on TV and the priest was saying his closing prayers. I opened my eyes, closed my eyes and saw this vision of God in clothes. I started crying. It was like a movie. It just happened. God's grace said, 'You have so much hatred, so much bitterness,' and it was true."

Superficial happiness

A similar spiritual awakening happened to Bagatsi. Recalling those moments, he asks unconvincingly, a grown man bawling like a helpless child.

"That's when I realized happiness is superficial. Joy is something deeper. There's peace," he says.

As if by miracle, he shed off his vices without any effort—cigarettes, drugs, mindless spending.

"But it often makes life difficult... On my own, I wanted to quit, but I always fell into temptation. That's where I understood what God said: 'Without Me, you can do nothing,'" he says.

His sudden transformation was met with mixed reactions. Some friends were supportive, others ridiculed him. But he was more understanding. "I was like them once... Now I understand the El Shaddai. Many pals also pursue, because they've encountered God."

Still, he has made sure to respect his friends' beliefs—or lack thereof. "If they're not receptive, I stop convincing them to renew their relationship with God. It's hard if you're too forceful. But when they have a problem and they call, that's when I remind them of God's power."

Greed and freedom

In one of his dialogues with his Maker, Castañeda says God asked him to open up his jewelry business, his only livelihood, as it was the cost of his troubles. He was reluctant, but by this time he had learned to trust his heart, hearing it all in his faith.

With no money to support his lifestyle, he learned to take the journey and experienced what he realized was the daily life of many. "I experienced what it was like to want to eat at McDonald's but didn't have enough money."

In turn, he also rediscovered simple joys, like eating fresh pandesal (bread) from the neighborhood bakery, because it was all he could afford.

"You lose all your insecurities," he says. "You fear all those material things because you want to impress other people. But when you meet God, you lose that inhibition. Not caring about what people would think about you—that's freedom."

He adds: "Before, when it was my mind's birthday I would give away one. But when it was my friends', I'd be ashamed to spend less than P5,000 for a gift. I would lip in a restaurant and the waiter not because I wanted to help, but because I wanted to be recognized. I wanted people to remember me... I would [manage] my customers' ego (so they'd buy), and sell my jewelry (spec) (a) times their cost. I was greedy."

Goodness of heart

For some time, he lived off the goodness of heart of some loyal friends. After quitting his jewelry business, he started selling frozen cookies, selling them at P800 each. Such friends would instead pay him P5,000 each. He attributed all this to God's hands.

Lately, he received what he now calls his "gift from God": Technomotion, the Swiss watch brand where he's a minor local partner. God has enabled him a more comfortable life. It was he who convinced his partners that Willie Revillame would be a good endorser for the brand, and promised until the 17's best and yes.

On keeping friendships that cut across political and social affiliations, he insists he's not biased. "Madali kasama. I'm for Villar from the start. Noynoy only announced his intentions to run recently. Same with Escap."

Data he have an agenda?

"In this world, hindi pwedeng puro (no agenda, puro puro. If you're all business with your friends, their relationship with you will also be just business... And when you have friends, don't expect them to help you. Someone else may help you, it may not be them. People are imperfect. You have resentments because you put too many expectations on your friendships."

Bargaining with God

He's not, however, immune to human frailty. Yet, he succumbs to temptations. And sometimes he bargains with God.

"I'm not a saint," he says. Though he no longer goes to gay bars, "sometimes I feel lonely," he admits. "I long for human love. That's the time I go to God. I say sorry. Sometimes, I ask Him, 'God, can I [be with someone], at least once a year?' In the Bible, the act of [homosexual] sex is a sin, but being a homosexual isn't a sin.

"With God, if you ask forgiveness, He takes you back. But with people, you say sorry and they take you back, pero may kemal sa. I'm just happy that I get to meet God while I'm still strong and able to serve Him."

At GMF of Castañeda's birthday parties, guests included friends like Laurel Enriquez, Mel Mathay, Hilma Vokes, Brenda Reyes, Gigi Reyes, Letty Ruiz, Rebo Belchand, Susan Limjoco, Erin Cuna, Nel Philips

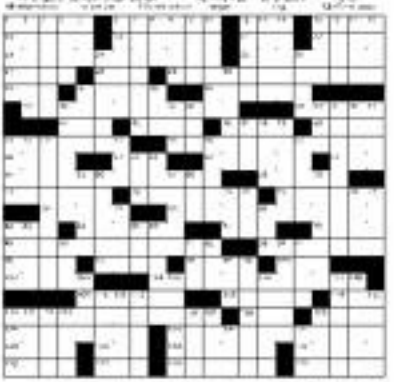
ROBERT Castañeda (right) with Willie Revillame

WITH GOD Loves Prayer Community members

Sunday Crossword

PREMIER CROSSWORD By Frank A. Longo

NEW YEAR'S TUNE TRANSPOSING



Answer on page B4

A friend for all seasons, for all reasons

By Larry Levina
Contributor

ROBERT CASTAÑEDA SHOULD have had a career in politics. He simply knows everybody, and that was evident in his birthday dinner last week.

Some 250 guests from all sectors of society came from far and near to wish him well, including Willie Revillame who arrived near midnight. Gloria Diaz took an hour off from her celebrity stylist to guest the bash. Bro. Eli Soriano also there, regaling guests about—what else—"presidentiables."

Robert's coup of the night was having pal Imelda Marcos, Governor Vilma Soledad and Manny Villar's only daughter Camille, in one photo.

From the fashion industry came Rusty Lopez, Lattie Silva, Ivory Rodgluk and design artist Jeanny Francia. From retail came Theresa Concepcion Sanchez of the Cinderella's, the mom of runway beauty Kris Ann Ching Cruz started the night away with Orgie Tacopi, whose only daughter Mia was coming home from London for the holidays. Designer, decorator and photojournalist Christian Espiritu was teary eyed when he saw Bongay Manese, whom he hadn't seen in decades.

A kilometric table groaned with a feast of many Kapampangan dishes, along with a tall birthday cake ready for cutting up.

What's the secret of Robert's staying powers, with all these friendships forged since the '70s and still going strong? He says it's his unbiased loyalty and that I don't gossip. I can keep secrets. My friends say I am a good listener to their problems and problematics," said this happy octogenarian as he surveyed the scene, which also included mannequins chatting with former supermodels and a monologuer discussing politics with several mayors and governors.

Manny Villar and Noynoy Aquino arrived separately and talked candidly with guests who quizzed them. A gifted boy sang beautiful songs, while a bossa nova band kept spirits up.

That was one of the happiest, most relaxed birthdays I have ever attended—full of the season's joy and delight, with laughter and dancing going until into the wee hours of the night.

ROBERT Castañeda, Sen. Manny Villar and Tito Sotto

CAMILLE Villar and Sharlet Soledad

BONGBONG Marcos and Benjie Tayag

GLORIA Diaz and Rusty Lopez

BRENDA Reyes and Mona Lesaca

BAT and Bally Floresca, and Mark Villar

LEA Castañeda

A Healthy Body for a Joyful Season!

The greatest gift, they say, is love. But the greatest gift you can give yourself this festive Holiday season is health. Reward yourself with a fulfilling, productive, and an even more loving life by keeping your body in top-top shape. A healthy you can only mean you can give more of yourself, and dedicate even more of yourself to your chosen passions in life. This and the following pages will offer you a range of options to keep you feeling great and jolly all throughout the year.

Winthrop generics: global brand, local price

The price of medicines has always been a concern, considering that a great number of Filipinos suffer from serious diseases that require maintenance treatment. If drug costs prevent millions of Filipinos from having access to effective, high-quality, but affordable medicines, then it's as if Filipinos were denied access to basic healthcare services.

Recognizing that making important medicines accessible to Filipinos should be the responsibility of all service-oriented pharmaceutical organizations, sanofi-aventis, one of the largest research-based pharmaceutical companies in the world, launched its generics arm, Winthrop Pharmaceuticals Philippines, Inc., in October 2007.

A leading global generics company

Built on the enduring strengths of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in the pharmaceutical industry, Winthrop guarantees the highest standards of quality not only in terms of product efficacy and safety, but also in terms of strict manufacturing quality controls.

Winthrop benefits from the expertise and state-of-the-art technology of sanofi-aventis. And because of this, the public is assured that they are getting the best generic products at significantly lower prices.

A global generics company, Winthrop enjoys strong market positions in more than 22 countries throughout Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. It is the leading generics company in Central and Eastern Europe.

Winthrop has a wide range of generic medications that address major health needs in therapeutic areas such as metabolic, cardiology, thrombosis and anti-infectives. It has a large product portfolio of about 300 molecules. Winthrop generics include those of its own molecules (auto generics), as well as those from other molecules whose patents have expired.

Quality generics at local price

Winthrop believes that the availability of quality generics is a key factor in the healthcare management of Filipinos. Thus, since its launch two years ago, the company has been providing access to worldclass lifesaving medicines within the budgets of Filipino patients.

Winthrop offers an extensive portfolio of affordably priced generics aimed at improving health outcomes. Winthrop amlodipine, an anti-hypertensive drug, is about 56 percent more affordable than the leading brand in the market; its ciprofloxacin, an antibiotic with a wide range of indications, is 37 percent cheaper than the originator brand, while Winthrop simvastatin, a powerful cholesterol-lowering drug which prevents cardiovascular disease, is also priced 50 percent lower than the innovator brand.

The product line of Winthrop includes generics of its well-researched molecules, among which are an anti-platelet drug that helps prevent a second stroke or heart attack and a highly effective and safe treatment for type 2 diabetes, among others.

With Winthrop generics, Filipino patients have the chance to stick to their treatment regimens at a much lower cost, and with the assurance that their medicines are of the highest quality.

Reduction of healthcare costs

Winthrop hopes to actively and responsively contribute to the reduction of healthcare costs in the country. Its launch in the Philippine market is a timely response to the government's call to make essential medicines within the reach of all Filipinos.

The president and general manager of sanofi-aventis Philippines Inc., Cesty Pleatoys, points out that the Winthrop brand guarantees quality while ensuring affordability. He stresses, "Through Winthrop, we reaffirm our company's commitment to play a responsible role in providing improved access to effective, quality medicines at competitive and affordable prices."

In the flourishing generic drug market, Winthrop is a generic medicine manufacturer with a difference.

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In the flourishing generic drug market, Winthrop is a generic medicine manufacturer with a difference.

GLOBAL BRAND
LOCAL PRICE

Winthrop Generics.
Gamot na global-standard. Gamot na affordable. Hindi sa sanofi-aventis, ang Winthrop Generics ay prescribed sa iba't ibang bansa lalo na mga pangmatching karamdaman tulad ng hypertension, diabetes, infection, atbp.

Piliin ang Winthrop Generics. Siguradong sa kalidad. SIGURADO KA DITO.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about Winthrop Generics.

Winthrop
Part of the sanofi-aventis group

GENERICS

Winthrop

sanofi aventis

Snub the meat, say hello to veggies

BEEPING OLDSMOBILES AWAY from the cackled this holiday season, in fact, throughout the year, revives a delicious balance of the right dietary choices and an active lifestyle. Our culture often presents us to choices that may either take us out of the balance, or help us maintain it. The following is a simple guidepost to keep us on track to a healthy, happy 365 days of 2010.

Cut down on meat and other animal products. Boston health researchers Dr. Anne Sailor (Sun) say things "as good as meat as possible" ("There is no healthy at Ann Sgt. 12 Steps to achieve it") include animal meat, especially processed meat and animal milk and milk products like butter.

"Processed meats contain chemical additives that greatly increase the risk of various cancers, including oral cancer, leukemia, brain tumors, and pancreatic cancer," he said.

Scientist Anne Thun, author of the "No Daily Bread Cancer Prevention Program," cited studies in us from the body as a result of ingesting animal-based protein "a diet high in animal-based protein increases the amount of acid in the body. This triggers a buffering mechanism, which releases stored calcium from the bones. The body would normally recalibrate the calcium released, but the animal protein inhibits the gain (the acid retention that controls this or other plan). The body then excretes the calcium, causing bone loss."

Plant then cited research suggesting that "other high in vegetable protein might actually be somewhat protective against osteoporosis."

Biochemistry, medication and nutritional cosmetics specialist Doctor Betty de Villa, dean, College of Medicine, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, revealed during a Philippine College of Physicians Health Forum in Quezon City that the two for faster livestock production is the agribusiness sector resulted to practices that were unnatural and, worse, could set the breeding ground for new version of viruses and toxins.

"What's disturbing is food production is the abundance of vaccines, drugs and growth promoters to meat. The residues are dangerous," adds veterinarian Rosemarie Amigo, who heads the viral vaccine production laboratory of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

Nobel Prize winning Indian scientist Rajendra Pachauri, a vegetarian and the head of the UN Climate Bo., al, appeals to people worldwide to cut less meat to fight global warming and lessen greenhouse gas emissions.

Medical doctor turned entrepreneur Omar Andres calls December and January the "slow suicide months" and appeals to people not to wait for their New Year's diet to finish that unhealthy, indeed, gone wrong.

"There's advertising of hate and meat products out nearly the intellect. When the metabolic meltdown occurs that's only when the ambulance call starts," Andres said. He cited facts of his long-term reversed cancer patients who gave the meatless diet among other healthy lifestyle changes to try and succeeded.

T. Colin Campbell, a Jacob Gould Schurman professor emeritus of nutrition biochemistry of Cornell University in New York, urged Filipinos to give plant-based diets a try. "The China Study," which Campbell co-authored with son Thomas Campbell II, cited research data showing that animal protein promotes the growth of tumors. It publishes a project which culminated in a 20-year partnership among Cornell University, Oxford University and the Chinese Academy of Preventive Medicine.

Some health experts noted that the nutrients one gets from meat or animal products can also be found in most plant and fruit sources. The Food and Nutrition Research Institute, for instance, said the protein value of beans is comparable to the same as is pork, beef, chicken and other animal sources. In place of meat, good sources of iron are legumes and dried beans.

The Food and Nutrition Research Institute said (mabuhay!) protein content is two times more than that of milk, its Vitamin A four times more than that of milk, and potassium three times more than in bananas.

Author Dean Ornish MD, who developed the Ornish Diet specifically formulated to reverse heart disease, recommends a regression diet together with exercise, meditation, an emotional support group and quitting smoking.

One can search on the Internet for vegetarian restaurants offering meals that can approximate the taste of the "real thing." Check out the vegetarian restaurants nationwide as listed at Happycow's Guide to Vegetarian Restaurants and Health Food Stores (http://www.happycow.net/asia/philippines/).

For those who find eating out expensive, you can learn vegetarian cooking for "cut-backers" unhealthy culinary habits as well through the DB Verano Enterprises "Simon Vegetarian" store at GS5-0060 for schedules of free cooking lessons and vegetarian seminars with nutritionist Betty Verano.

You can also visit www.getvegetarian.com for a free vegetarian starter kit which is loaded with information, tips and recipes.

(This has been a compilation of various articles authored by Dean R. Salazar that have appeared in the features "Especially those dessert on music, dairy"; "Cultivate first, fructure due to animal products"; "Cheese cuts find their way to dining tables"; "Temperament, does caffeine pabbit.")

'Personalized Healthcare' customizes treatments

GUIDED BY A BETTER UNDERSTANDING of diseases and the differences between people, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies AstraZeneca is adopting a "personalized" approach to healthcare, particularly in developing targeted cancer treatments. Personalized medicine is the application of genetic and molecular data to help determine an individual's predisposition to a particular disease and his or her response to treatment.

"I believe the potential exists to make significant advances against cancer and other killer diseases and the big brand, in that focus personalized healthcare brings great potential therapies. Another result of experimentation of healthcare," said David Brennan, chief executive officer of AstraZeneca.

In front of an audience of 900 key international healthcare stakeholders, Brennan discussed AstraZeneca's commitment to focus innovation in healthcare in his speech "Improving the prognosis cancer cures through innovation" delivered at the 2009 Medical Innovation Summit, a major industry conference organized by the international consultancy Cleveland Clinic. To obtain the progress towards better, more targeted patient treatments, he added, the science of the anti-cancer drug gefitinib, "AstraZeneca did not give up on gefitinib despite early setbacks in its development. I am delighted that our determination is now helping many patients around the globe," Brennan said.

Gefitinib works by blocking the action of epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR), which can become deranged and promotes the multiplication of cancer cells. In July 2009, the European Commission granted marketing authorization for gefitinib for the treatment of adults with locally-advanced or metastatic NSCLC with mutations for the gene that encodes for EGFR. In Europe, gefitinib is the only oral targeted therapy available for first line use and one of just a handful of anticancer medicines already available to target only those patients most likely to benefit.

In the Philippines, gefitinib is indicated for the treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic NSCLC who have previously received chemotherapy or who are not suitable for chemotherapy.

Brennan said that gefitinib played a key role in furthering understanding of personalized treatments in NSCLC and that it has set the agenda for future drug development. Many areas within AstraZeneca. The gefitinib story showed that lung cancer is not just one disease but is caused by many different disease modes, some involving different biological pathways, he explained.

"This knowledge has led to our increasing understanding that we need to target the disease with different treatments, depending on the type of lung cancer it is. The lesson has not simply in testing medicines among the whole population but on identifying groups with specific molecular subsets and treating medicines among these groups," Brennan stressed.

Brennan revealed that AstraZeneca is investing in the discovery and development of potential new treatments in the areas of brain, breast and ovarian cancer, as well as continuing its commitment to lung cancer. "At least 1 in 10 of AstraZeneca medicines in clinical development is adopting a personalized approach this year and this figure rises to over half for our anti-cancer medicines currently in development."

"One of the ways we contribute to patient-related healthcare is by participating in global research. We have 12 dedicated people working on 11 ongoing clinical trials involving almost 900 patients in 53 sites all over the Philippines," said Amal S. Kohlhase, president of AstraZeneca Philippines.

Gefitinib is a prescription medication and can only be used as advised by a doctor. It is always best to consult a healthcare professional.

The most commonly reported adverse effect in patients taking gefitinib are diarrhea, skin reactions (including rash, acne, dry skin and itching), nausea, vomiting, anorexia, and generalized weakness (asthenia).

Gefitinib is not to be given to those with severe hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any other components of the pill.

NO NEED TO FAST AFTER FEASTING

FERNSlim: The safe and easy way to lose weight

THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS ALMOST OVER and summer is just around the corner. Are you sorry you pigged out over the holidays? Do you dread the thought of starving yourself to shed those unwanted pounds before you hit the beach? Or do you simply want to keep that wholesome figure and maintain your ideal weight?

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The most difficult part of losing weight is the feeling of deprivation. With FERNSlim, this is not a problem! The product is designed to keep you feeling full for a longer period of time, causing you to eat less!

Bianca Manalo, Binibining Pilipinas Universe and FERNSlim endorser lost 35 pounds to attain her fighting form for the pageant. "My schedule for the pre-pageant training was so jam-packed! The pictorials, rehearsals and social functions I had to attend, I was always tired and lacked sleep. The natural defense mechanism for our body to fight fatigue is to eat more. Thanks to FERNSlim, it was easy for me not to overeat. I still take it daily to maintain my figure," spoke the beauty queen with her winning smile.

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From its launch in December of 2008, FERNSlim is now one of the fastest selling weight management products among retailer outlets. FERNSlim is available at Puregold, South Star Drug, Rose Pharmacy, 7-Eleven and 1000 distributors. For more information, visit www.bodslim.com or call 638-FERN.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Dennis G. Rotoras

Joan Garcia

WISH LIST

I WISH the MORE JOBS FOR MORE ME people in 2010. I hope we will come up with more locally produced films the entire year. I also wish that Channel 7, now being run by Manny Pangilinan, would improve. The same TV networks, the better. For show biz personalities who want to get involved in politics, I hope they will sincerely if their true goal is to help the Filipino people. Marlon O. Ocio

Triple-Palanca winner now a movie Page D3

Celeb Politician back on TV soon

By the Entertainment staff

EVERYONE THOUGHT celebrity-politician would run for a high government post next year.

Instead, O'Pau reportedly chooses to return to television.

An insider recently told Rushes that GP is set to anchor his home network's prime-time newscast, and assume a top-level management position in the station.

Hurting hosts

A long-running TV show was recently yanked, leaving Popular Hosts host, and prime.

Positions were made all-around of new assignments is forthcoming shows, including one that would replace Oil Show. Unfortunately, Replacement Show was shelved before it could be launched.

The bosses tried to woo back Hyk to no avail, counting as they now host the shabby treatment

(RUSHES SUNDAY)

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ANGELICA Panganiban

Celeb...

From page D1

they go.

Comeuppance

Senior Director threw a blast lit upon learning that Young Filmmaker would share directing credits for a huge film. SD demanded that YF's name be removed instead, but Kieron caught up with the arrogant filmmakers.

When IT made a solo film, it turned out to be much better than 60's lackluster movie.

Territory

Concerned Manager is said to be vetting the services of major talents to TVS.

Among the stars GH is planning to move to the fledgling network is Gene Hinds, who got in trouble with the boss, as in his 60 minutes, he GH-ing to Hinds as to TVS to prevent the nascent (wordie of Sep Jim)

GH and TR quarrelled over CK, that's why is GM simply studying matters? Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.

Joining forces

Another Boss Manager is hoping to wrest rank TIS. A source swears JM wanted to crash the Christmas party "to save TVS big box Hilario Pangilinan and secure jobs for his employees/friends."

Perhaps JM should remember the radio DJ JH once approached PM for work a memorial silliness, but the latter declined, saying "I don't want to be caught in GM's room with other people."

Official terror

Movie Jinping is severely challenged in communication and people-skills.

When she needs to use English-Speaking Celebrities, Mr. who-are-you-to-ask-us.

Unknown to JSG, director communicating with a platoon of Official Terrorists.

Less all the way

Answer to Ms M-Lei Salvaje is doing all shows in the dark, saving Manila tons of "Con" running to lala bis, including restrooms.

Top of the tabloids

The top show biz scores in PDI tabloid Readers Die week, 22nd valley are not moved, if we are moved.)

- Doctor Pacific interrogate on life story re Dolphy. (Aside: torture at Jones Dolphy used.)
- Al Derek Anne to sing show real...together. Duo goodbye. (Must be love.)
- Kris Aquino: Hindi ako masisisi ko hindi ako nanganganay (Hindi pwede kay Kuya?)

Like mashing up all his old movies in a blender

Indie filmmaker Khavn de la Cruz adapts Palanca triple winner for the digital age

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER KHAVN DE la Cruz compares the making of his latest feature, "Mondomanila," to childbirth. Not that he's ever gone into labor, no.

"The main challenge was making up my mind," he explained. "Just like a baby—whether to have it or not."

A crucial question was length. "Should I make it one or the [Palanca winning] novel [Ed Maltazo] has?" Nilwarral or do I make a short version?"

To squeeze the sprawling novel into a two-hour film feature would have been "impossible," he admitted, "but and I discussed it. We can remove [some elements and still] retain what is essential."

He described as "collaborative" the writing process with Nilwarral. "Without the novel, there wouldn't be film."

The tragedy wrought by Tropical Storm "Ondoy" pushed De la Cruz to finally shoot this, his 25th film, a project that took seven years in gestation. "That's when I knew we had to grind."

He called the Palanca-winning short story

LINK D2

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GALLERIA

1 RESERVE	5 MAC PG 6
2 AND DARLING KONG ASWANG	7 MAYAWANA
3 MOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN	8 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
4 ABC FRIDAY	9 HARANA
5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	10 RESERVE

MANILA

1 MAYAWANA	5 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 MAC PG 13	6 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
3 ABC FRIDAY	7 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN
4 NOBODY, NOBODY BUT JUAN	8 ABC FRIDAY
5 AND DARLING KONG ASWANG	9 MAC PG 6
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	10 MAYAWANA
11 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE	11 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
	12 RESERVE

METRO EAST

NOVALICHES

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	5 MAYAWANA
2 MAYAWANA	6 MAC PG 6
3 MAC PG 6	7 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG
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4 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE	8 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG

LIPA

DASMARINAS

1 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	5 MAYAWANA
2 ABC FRIDAY	6 MAC PG 6
3 MAC PG 6	7 ABC FRIDAY
4 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN	8 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
5 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE	9 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

STARMILLS

IMUS

1 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG	5 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE	6 ABC FRIDAY
3 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN	7 MAC PG 6
4 MAC PG 6	8 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG
5 MAYAWANA	
6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	

ANGELES

TAGUIGAN

1 MAC PG 6	5 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE
2 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE	6 MAC PG 6
3 ABC FRIDAY	7 ABC FRIDAY
4 MAYAWANA	

DUMAGUETE

BACOLOD

1 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE	5 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG
2 ABC DARLING KONG ASWANG	6 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11
3 MAC PG 6	7 MAC PG 6
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	8 ABC FRIDAY
5 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN	9 NOBODY, NOBODY...BUT JUAN
6 ABC FRIDAY	10 I LOVE YOU GOODBYE

ILOILO

GENSAN

1 MAYAWANA	
2 MAC PG 6	
3 ABC FRIDAY	
4 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	

ILOCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)

1 MAC PG 6	
2 ABC FRIDAY	
3 SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL 11	

Avatars making love

Stars of blockbuster film say how and praise their 'King' director

LOS ANGELES—BY THE INTERNET OF BY-recognizer powerchairs, we asked director James Cameron the gripping question that has been in your mind since you watched "Avatar" with millions of other people: How do the Na'vi and the avatars make love?

"I can't answer that in mixed company," Cameron said humorously—with a smile, suddenly being wary as he looked at the group of journalists interviewing him. But he added: "Actually, we had it in and we cut it out." Then, still grinning, he quipped: "So this will be something for the special edition DVD, if you want to see how they have sex."

But when the company was no longer, unusually, the director of the visually stunning film told us how their make whoopee in Pandora. They use their tails.

Added DVD footage

"They do!" exclaimed Zoe Saldana, alluding but definitely not so tweeting in person in her 10-foot-tall, blue-skinned character, Neytiri. With the way she described this scene with Sam Worthington (Jake Sully), "Avatar" may earn millions of dollars more when the DVD version is released with the added footage. "It made each perfect sense. If you ask to your families and you're starting to cross, when you ask invest period? I almost feel like you'll have the most amazing orgasm, I guess (laughter). It was a very human to shoot because there were so many technical things that you have to keep in mind. But getting all details to all those might disrupt the fluidity of how it seems to supposed to take place."

Zoe continued: "And because Jim was shooting for a PG-13 rating, we couldn't move in certain directions. The motion capture look a little too real. But PG-13 rating standards, for it was really funny for Sam and me. We had a lot of giggles there."

Technological breakthroughs

The actress of Bonnie Bacon and Dominic Monaghan, encountered on Jimmy, who's being hailed for his technological breakthroughs in "Avatar": "I've never worked with folks like Jim and him on such an intimate level because we were working for a year and a half...Sam was relatively green on with his knowledge and his art. We will step my toes, allow or engage to motion Jim specifically because he understood very early on—and this was a very new thing to do if you're going to work with technologies like performance capture—that you have to invest the time in allowing your actors to know exactly what they're doing and establish a very specific trouble with every scene."

"In fact, a lot of what happened to be exciting to something, I saved to know its size, color and texture. Jim always knew that. He wanted us to have a very close relationship without environment in the film even if it wasn't there visible we were dancing. That's why we went to Hawaii, where we got our feet wet in the water dances. By the time we got back to LA and started shooting, I knew what it was like to walk on barren grounds even though we were shooting in a warehouse that was completely gray and all cement."

Sam went to chat the previous time we interviewed him on the set of "Clash of the Titans" in England. "I was wearing a body skirt, showing off my legs," the actor grossly recalled in this latest interview. Well, he actually had a bib on in his role for "Clash..." but Sam's typical Australian humor faked to the one point in that shot to the UK, he roughly saved the GB.

Like an expedition

When Sam was asked if he hangs out with James, he referred to the filmmaker's forays in a Russian submersible to shoot his underwater documentaries. The actor predicted after the end of the Avatar days in 2010, told: "I've had beers with Jim but I haven't gone on expeditions with him yet. I'm a bit nervous doing those expeditions. Because he goes out with those Russians and launches his submersibles. But I'd still like to do those expeditions with him. Making a movie with him is like an expedition. He's a weird citizen from Canada and I'm a bird thief from Australia. We get on like a house on fire. We're both down-to-earth and passionate about work. And we know how lucky we are to be working in the industry. I would hate to have with him anymore. I'd love him about 13, if not more."

Spending almost two years with the "Titanic" film he didn't feel like Gudguy at all, according to Sam. He explained: "I didn't

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Andrew V. Arguelles

had during the 14 months that I was filming that I was doing a big impression of a movie. That's how much I'm around pressure [on] me. It was like you're in the eye of the storm which was very smooth and calm. This is not putting the film down, but it felt like we were making a small documentary film. That's how non-operative, it's a family."

Signatory Warner, Dr. Grace Augustine in the film, which is praised as one of this year's best, worked with James on "Aliens," back when he wasn't "King of the World" yet. She recalled how the crew was hostile to James, who was not yet widely acclaimed then compared to Ridley Scott, who worked on the first film in the "Alien" series.

The actress, who told us that she couldn't believe it has been nearly 30 years since she shot "The Year of Living Dangerously" with Mel Gibson in the Philippines, said: "When Jim and I were doing 'Aliens,' the crew was like, 'Ridley Scott's shoot us too-big for Jim, this Canadian guy, to step into.' Every time he tried to show his work, 'The Terminator,' to the crew, they wouldn't show up. But he did a wonderful job on 'Aliens' and the crew eventually came to respect him very much, but it wasn't easy."

In the spirit of fun, Signourney was asked if Jamie should now be promoted to "Emperor of the Universe," a title the genre-acclaim he is being bestowed on him since "Avatar" dazzled critics and filmgoers alike. "No, I think it has to be a bigger place—the solar system or two solar systems," Signourney replied with a laugh. "But he has earned it. I remember reading the script...I'm a fast reader but it took about three days for me to read the script twice because it was so dense with details. I'd be reading along and 30 he like, 'This is great but here is Jim over going to do one of this!' The first time I saw the movie, I was so moved because he has done what he set out to do. Only he could have done it."

E-mail the columnist at rmgarin_0508@yahoo.com and read his blog, "The Manila Report," at http://blogs.inquirer.net/manilareport.

FROM left, James Cameron, Zoe Saldana, Sam Worthington and Sigourney Weaver

Brittany's hubby 'devastated'

LOS ANGELES—BRITTANY Murphy's husband says he was devastated by the 32-year-old's untimely death.

"My world was destroyed," an emotional Simon Monjack told the TV entertainment news program "Access Hollywood."

The British screenwriter spoke on Monday a day after the "Clueless" star died of cardiac arrest at her home. Recalling how Murphy's body was found, Monjack said her mother-in-law "went into the bathroom before me because she had been in there a long time. Her mom screamed for me and I ran. Then I called 911."

Monjack acknowledged his wife had been sick. "She

BRITTANY Murphy with husband Simon Monjack

had lasagna in it," he said, noting she had seen a doctor. "She had been tired at the end of the year. She had made a couple of mistakes."

He welcomed the outpouring of support from the Hollywood community, saying, "I couldn't have said it better," referring to the message actor Ashton Kutcher wrote via his page on entertainment-news blogging site TwitHer.

"[She] the world lost a little piece of sunshine," wrote Kutcher, who dated Murphy before she married Monjack in 2003, and costarred with her in "Just Married."

Autopsy examiners for Ventura County's medical examination of Murphy's body yielded no evidence of trauma."

The TMZ.com reportsaid, more website earlier reported, Murphy was very ill in the hours before her death and that multiple prescription drugs were discovered in her home. AFP

Like mashing...

From page B4

(2000), novel (2002) and script (2009) a "post-modern version of Edgardo Reyes' 'Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag.'"

De la Cruz co-wrote the "Mondomanila" screenplay with Sillawagan.

"I've been wanting to do a film on the city inspired by Ishmael Bernal's 'Manila by Night' and Lino Brocka's 'Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag,'" he said. "The novel [expressed] me as the perfect vehicle." But in the movie, he added, "the lines between the real and surreal ... are thoroughly distorted."

De la Cruz is a professed fan of Sillawagan's novel. "Who isn't?" he quipped.

The screenplay not only won a Palanca, it was also picked by the esteemed Sundance Co-Production Market in 2005.

It was another writer, Jun Cruz Reyes, who introduced De la Cruz to "Mondomanila" in 2002. "He told me, 'If you don't shoot it, I'll shoot you.' And he wasn't referring to his Pentax."

Using a Panasonic HPX 170 P2 HD camera, De la Cruz finished shooting "Mondomanila" in four and a half days in various areas in the metropolis—mainly in Barangay San Roque near TriNoma in Quezon City.

Another challenge was finding and gathering the cast, led by teen actor Timothy Muhuhe (of "Bantat" and "Ang Sexcort"), Mutya Orquia (of "Mondomanila") and young comedienne Whitney Tyson and Pulso.

"Working with other people could be hell, but it could be heaven, too. That's just the way it is. You take the bad with the sweet," Bela Cruz said.

He described "Mondomanila" as a "combination of several of my films...in terms of style," to a satisfied, "It's like mashing up all my films in a blender made in Botolista."

He hopes to premiere "Mondomanila" next year.

Savor

Merry Mornings at Jollibee

The Holidays won't be complete without the Simbang Gabi, a well-kept Filipino tradition where most families here mass together and celebrate the Christmas spirit.

And during these chilly mornings, it's best to enjoy a warm and delicious meal while continuing the bonding moments with your family. So before heading for home or work, stop over at Jollibee and treat yourself and your loved ones to the delightful pair of Hot Chocolate and 3-pc. Pancakes.

For only P 42, you can get your favorite creamy Hot Chocolate and pair it with the 3-pc. Pancakes for a truly satisfying breakfast treat. Savor the moist pancakes served with maple syrup and butter that goes well with the warm and soothing Hot Chocolate. You can also enjoy the Hot Chocolate solo for only P28.

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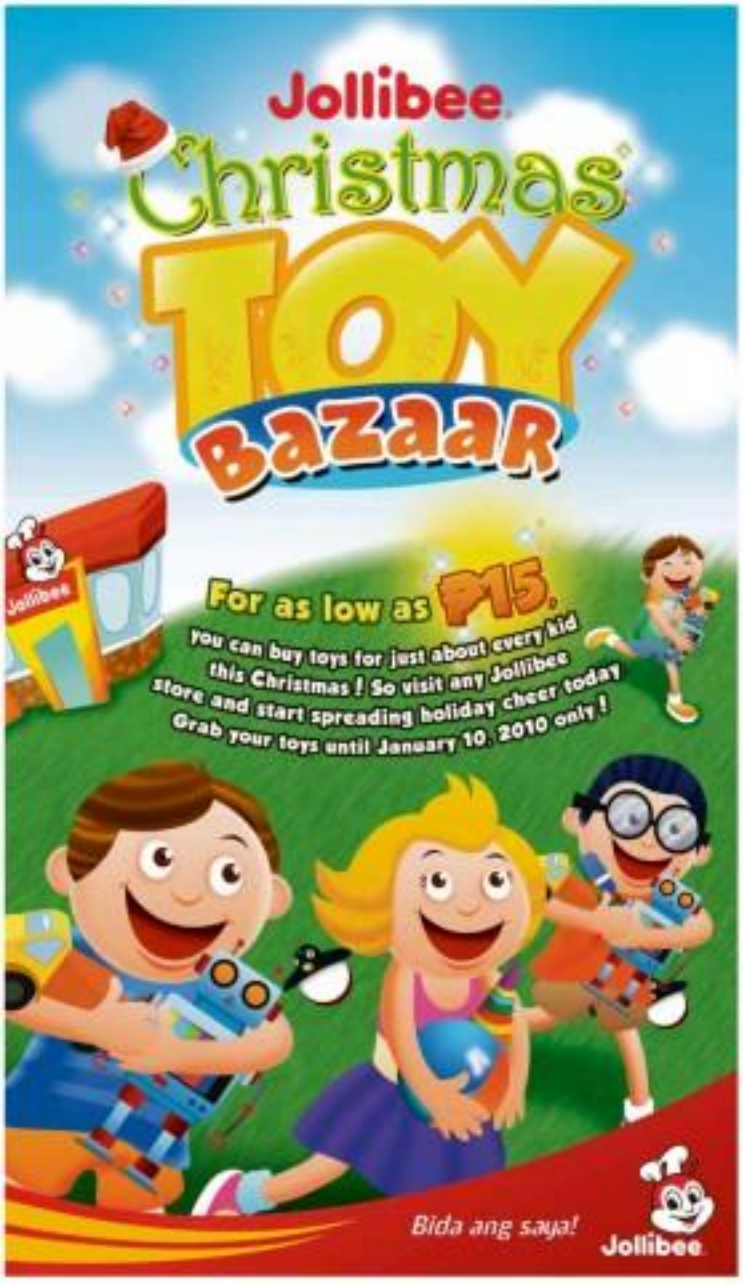

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